Paradise War
パラダイスウォー
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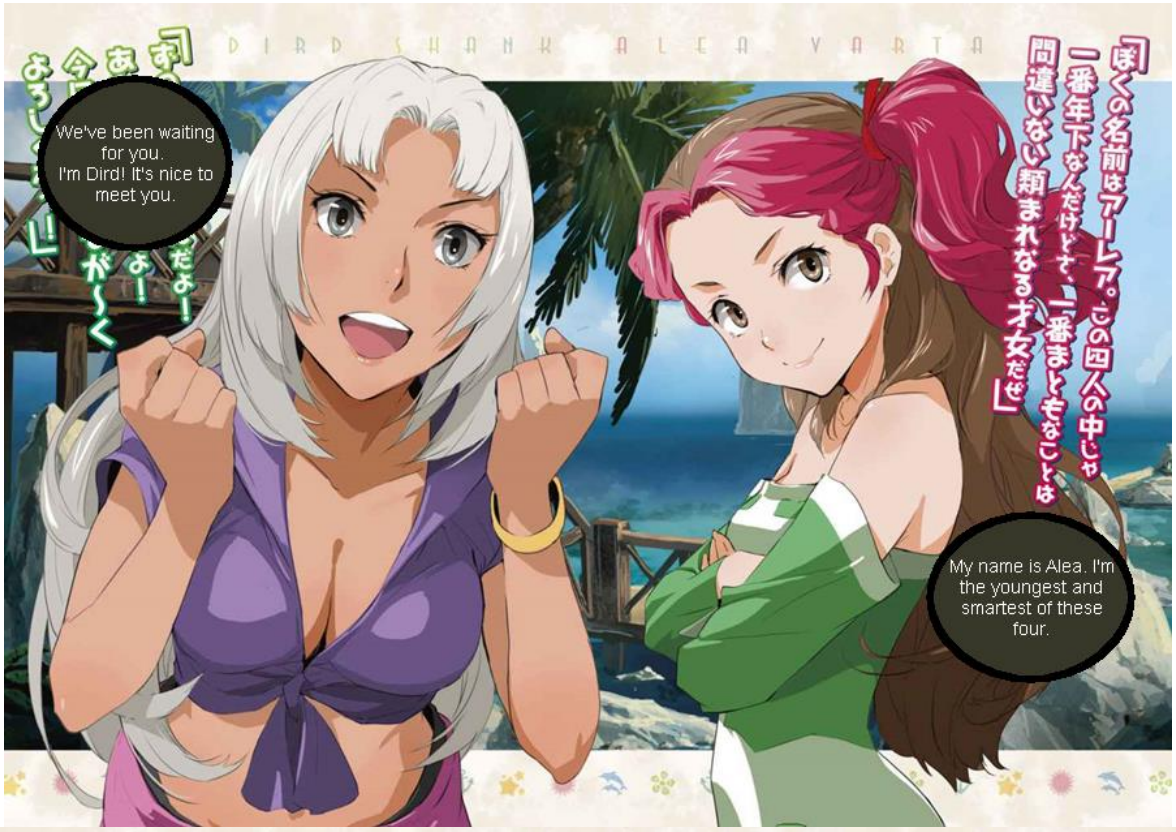
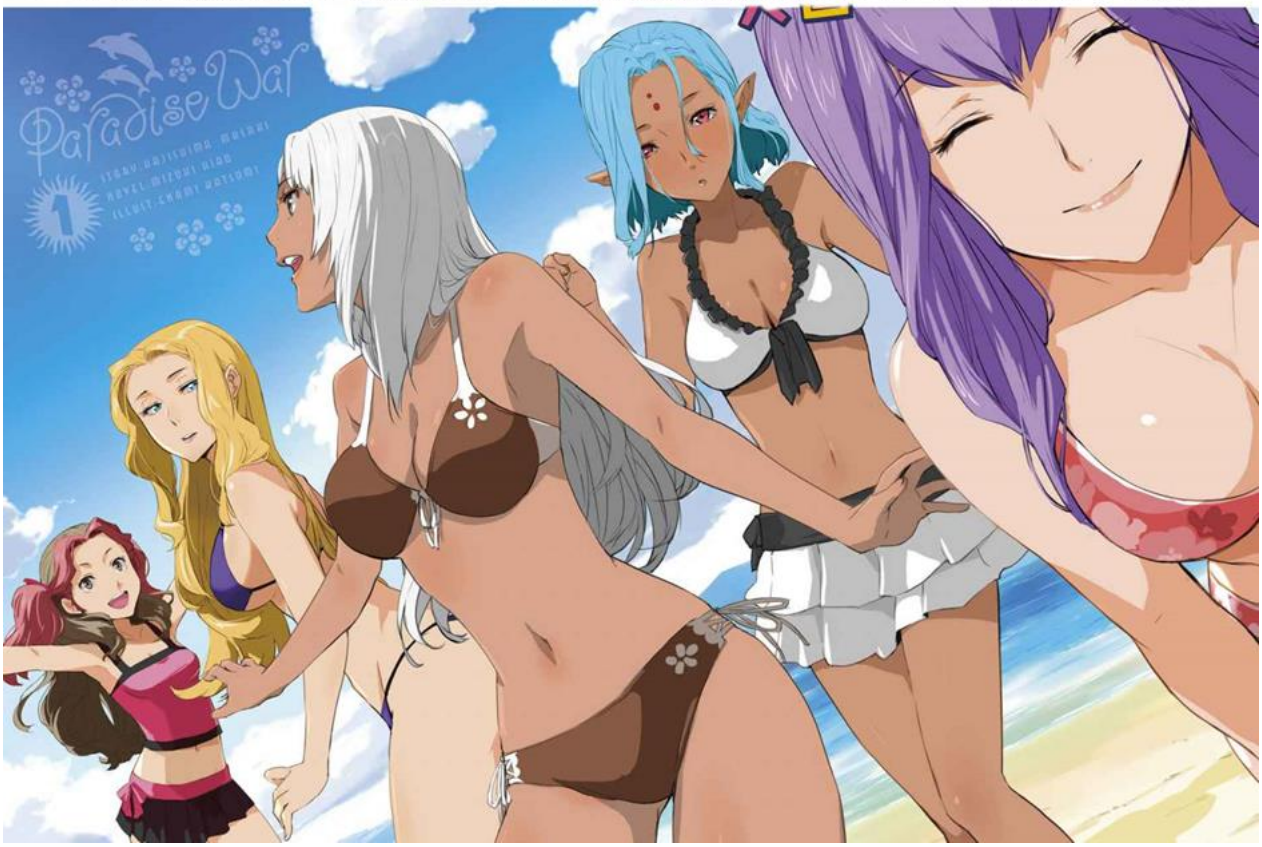
Hi! Welcome to a paradise in the South. We welcome you to Banjō Island. Please call me Miron Sensei.
MIRON PHAM


We've been waiting for you. I'm Dird! It's nice to meet you.
My name is Alea. I'm the youngest and smartest of these four.

I'm Apuesta. It's nice to meet you.
I'm Palty. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask.

It was a paradise. A heavenly place that always made my heart skip a beat.



Paradise War

盤上島設定図／島全景

BANJOU-ISLAND

Paradise War

STORY: KAJISHIMA MASAKI
NOVEL: MIZUKI HIRO
ILLUST: ENAMI KATSUMI

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Prologue

Wow. ……!

His heart was pounding, and his mind was trembling.

He couldn't believe what he was seeing, only to have the clear, glittering world burned into his mind.

The first thing that surprised him was the waterfall. In the distance, the center of the island rose up like a mountain, and a large waterfall flowing over the top of it was visible even from this beach. It was a symbolic sight of the island. And the great nature that surrounded it.

The sky was lush and blue with not a cloud, and if you looked down, you could see a lush forest - well, almost a jungle carpet of trees. In addition, the island was enveloped by the crystal clear cerulean blue sea, and there were many strange rocks that looked like small towers rising from the sea. Near the shore, there was a blue hole that seemed to be bottomless, but the boat carrying him passed over it with ease. The sea breeze that caressed his cheeks felt good on his sweat-soaked body.

It was the first time he had ever felt the air of a tropical island.

If he listened carefully, he could hear the faint sound of waterfalls, birds and insects. It no longer felt like Japan.

His eyes lit up and he murmured in admiration. “Wow, ..., it's beautiful, ...”

Of course, he was referring to the sight of the island, but also to the four girls waiting for him on the beach.

“Welcome to Banjō Island!　Welcome ～～～～!”

The tanned, brown-skinned girl shouted, waving her hands in the air, as the boat arrived at the dock near the girls.

He got down on the beach, and the girls came running up to him.

At first, his anxiety was too much. Living in an unknown land, interacting with new people.

But when he saw the bright faces of the girls, his anxiety turned to anticipation.

From today he would live on this island - “Banjō Island”. His new life was beginning.

This is where he, Shou Kukoma's life reached a major turning point...

Episode 1: The Beginning of Paradise

Shou Kukoma, this was back when he was still living on the mainland. It started as a very ordinary day, really nothing out of the ordinary.

“Shou-kun. I'll see you tomorrow.” A gorgeous, beautiful, yet graceful looking girl said.

The setting sun was fading across the city. At that time of the day, when people were quickly returning to their homes, the girl was the center of attention of many people. It was partly because of her beautiful appearance, but also because of the “princess” glamour that oozed from within. She was seen as a bit overbearing, but this was a natural trait of hers, and she never looked down on anyone.

The boy who knew her well - Shou, her childhood friend, responded with a smile. “Yeah, I'll see you tomorrow.”

The girl smiled, turned around, and walked gracefully through the sunset-tinted town. Three boys followed close behind, and two of them looked back at him and shouted loudly.

“Hey Shou! Whoever loses the rock-paper-scissors game tomorrow gets to buy the juice!”

“Don't forget! Haha, don't worry, I'll beat you tomorrow!”

Masuru and Suguru, two fat guys that Shou has known since elementary school. Shou smirked as he realized that his grin had the look of a bad boy.

“Damn it. What do you mean, “We're going to win”? I'm going to win again anyway, aren't I?” Shou murmured in exasperation, and the other boy patted him on the shoulder.

“What is it with you and your freakish strength in rock-paper-scissors?”

“Oh, Takeshi.”

Unlike the childish Masuru and Suguru, he - Takeshi - was a boy with the calm atmosphere of a butler. With his silky black hair, cultured and attractive face, fresh appearance, and casual consideration, Shou had a great deal of trust in him, as he had been his childhood friend even longer than Masuru and Suguru.

“See you later, Shou, and be careful on the way.”

“Oh, yes. Take care of Himeko-chan for me.”

“You don't have to tell me that.” As he said this, Takeshi raised the corner of his mouth slightly.

“Takeshi? What are you doing? Let's go.”

“Oh, I'm sorry Himeko, see you later Shou.”

Takeshi, who was called by the girl, also raised his hand lightly and left after her.

– Tenjou Himeko.

That was the name of the girl who was now in Shou's line of sight, parading through the town with three boys in tow.

She was the daughter of the company president. Shou, Takeshi, Masuru, and Suguru all had one thing in common: their fathers work for a large company run by her father, and the position their parents hold at the company had no small effect on the hierarchical relationship between Shou and the other children.

Himeko, the president's daughter; Takeshi, the executive director's son. Masuru, the son of a manager. Suguru, the son of a manager. ..... and Shou, the son of a humble layman.

It is a very natural pyramid that exists in modern society.

Shou, Takeru, and Himeko have been childhood friends for a long time, and they respect each other, but Masuru and Suguru look down on Shou. However, Shou understands that this is just a child's behavior.

“Well, ..., I guess I'll be going home then.” Shou looked back at the road he had taken to drop Himeko off, passed through the shopping district, and quickened his pace toward his home, which he had passed on the way.

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“..... Hmm? Mom?”

After a short walk through the shopping district that connected to the nearest station, into a quiet residential area and towards the mountains, you would find yourself in front of Shou's house - the entrance to a group of affordable company housing.

In front of the company housing where many ordinary citizens lived, some housewives dressed in casual clothes were chatting with each other. Their glamorous appearance was out of place in front of the company housing.

Among them, there was only one woman who wore the aura of an ordinary citizen - Shou's mother, with her shopping bag.

“It's been a while since I've seen you, Kukoma-san. Have you been traveling?” One of the housewives said in a ladylike manner.

At first glance, the housewives seemed to be gentle and kind, but it seemed as if they were

judging Shou's mother, and Shou's mother blushed a little embarrassed.

“Yes, well, I had a dinner party with some old friends ..... and I was back in the country for a bit.”

“Oh, really? You didn't mention anything to me, so I was worried.”

“I'm sorry, ... I'm sorry to bother you, but I was wondering if I could come back tomorrow to give you all a souvenir.”

“Oh, I'm sorry to bother you.” The housewives were snickering.

Shou's mother was smiling and talking with them for a while, but as soon as the housewives left the place together, she sighed a little, looking tired.

Shou called out to his mother at that moment.

“Mom.”

“Hi, Shou. Welcome home.”

“Yeah, I'm back. People nowadays .....”

“..... Yeah. Yeah, they're from over there.” Shou and his mother looked at the two housewives who had left.

The graceful looking housewives were headed for a huge corporate housing complex that was as beautiful as new. At first glance, the luxuriousness of the building was far different from the company housing that Shou and his family lived in, and the security was outstanding. You could see that it was for rich people only. Those housewives were all living in the company housing there.

It was literally a different world to live in.

“Shou, come on, let's go home. I have to make dinner.”

“Uh-huh.”

Shou's mother urged him to go to a small house in a rundown company housing complex.

– Hmmm ....., after all, every human being has a position .....

Shou felt a little depressed as he realized that he and his mother were the same person.

Later that night.

“Hey, how would you like to live on this southern island?”

It was out of the blue. In the middle of a simple dinner as usual in the living room, his father laughed and asked.

Shou stopped dipping his chopsticks in the boiled fish and sat stunned with his mouth open. It took him a while to understand what his father was saying. “Are you sure, Dad? I've always wanted to relax in a place like this.”

“You know what? Dad would definitely feel at home on this island! Wow, Mom brought back some good stuff!”

“Mmm-hmm. An old friend of mine gave it to me. She said it's a very nice island.”

His parents were getting excited. The pamphlet they were looking through had a picture of a beautiful tropical beach on the cover, and it was labeled “Banjō Island Emigration Guide”.

“What about ……? Wait, wait, wait. Does that mean you're going to emigrate?”

Shou's father nodded easily and said, “Yes.”

“What, what, what, what? No, no, no! No! No! I'm totally against it!” Shou stood up and raised his voice and arms in protest.

But that was to be expected: Shou was still a first-year high school student in the midst of his adolescence. There was no way he could just throw away everything he had built up and start a new life on a tropical island at such a young age. There was no way he could be so positive.

“But Shou, wouldn't you love to? Look at the crystal-clear waters of …… and the stunning natural beauty of the island! It's the perfect location! A chance for a lowly, low-wage family like ours to live on an island like this will never come your way if you miss it!”

“……. I'm sure you're right, but I'm not sure you're a poorly paid …….”

The pamphlet that the delighted father unfolded and showed them. It showed a beautiful bay with blue and azure waters. The colorful coral reefs were swarming with lovely fish, and the subtropical jungle with its huge trees was filled with wild birds. A huge waterfall cascaded down the mountain at the center of the island, and there were even hot springs gushing out all over.

Shou was convinced that it was a dream come true to be able to move to this island with his father's meager salary. He had never been to Hawaii or any other foreign country before. His longing swelled.

“I've never been abroad, let alone to Hawaii. But if we're going to live on this island for the rest

of our lives, that's a different story. It's too sudden, no matter what."

"Shou. Dad thinks children should grow up bravely and robustly in nature."

"What's with the serious face all of a sudden? I don't like it! I don't want to go to this island where there are no convenience stores, bookstores or game stores! I'm a child of civilization, a 21st century boy! I want to watch TV every day, and I want to be online! And I don't want to break up with Himeko-chan. ....."

"Oh, my God!"

"What? Dad? What's wrong with you?"

Shou's father suddenly started to hold his head and fell down deliberately, Shou's mother rushed to help him up.

"Oh, Dad! What's wrong? Are you okay?"

"Hmmm... ... Mom. It seems that my daily work at the office has taken its toll ... ... I can't get away from the overtime work... ... The drinking party that goes on until midnight every night... ... The long-packed train in the middle of summer that makes me lose consciousness. Waiting for a cab for an hour... ... Dad can't take it anymore... ..."

"Oh, Dad, ... for us in such a harsh environment... ..."

"What are you talking about, Mom... ... for the sake of the family... ... it's only natural... ...?

"Dad, ...!"

"What? Hey, Mom? What's wrong with you?"

This time, even his mother, who was supporting him, put her hand on her forehead and staggered. His father supported her on his shoulder and called out to her in concern. The situation was reversed.

"Oh... ... I feel light-headed. I wonder if it's because of the constant socializing with the neighbors... ... I'm tired of flattering them... ... I want to go away somewhere far away... ..."

"Mom, I'm sorry about... ... I'm sorry that Dad is such a poorly paid clerk... ...!"

"It's okay, Dad... ... I'm sorry I'm such a weak woman, too... ... Ugh."

"Mom!"

"Dad!"

Gasp! … ... Glances.

“Oh... ... if we can live on this island, I'm sure mom will feel better... ...!”

“If we can live on this island, ... I'm sure your father will be relieved of the stress of work, ...!”

... ... Furtive glances.

His parents hugged each other in tears. The gazes they sent at each other pierced the mute Shou. It was easy to understand the two of them.

“You can't do that to me! I don't want to go!”

“Huh, ..., I see. Then we have no choice... ...” His parents let go of each other's bodies and his father stood up quickly and stood in front of Shou.

“What? Did you understand me? Dad.”

“Yeah, I understand you just fine, Shou.”

“Yeah. I understand you, Shou.”

“Dad. ..... Mom. .....!”

Honestly, Shou felt bad for both of them. He knew very well that they had been through a lot together. He almost nodded his head, but he still wanted to stay here.

“I understand very well that you want to stay. So Shou...” His father put his left hand on his waist, patted Shou on the shoulder with his right hand, and said with a gentle smile. “If you really want to stay here, quit school and work hard and live on your own.”

Thus ended Shou's normal life.

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“I heard that you're moving out. I'm really surprised.”

“Yeah, ..., I see.”

On their way home from school. The five of them were walking along the shopping street in the middle of town as usual. When Himeko asked, Shou nodded weakly.

A few nights ago, Shou had almost said to his parents, “Okay, I'll go by myself. But when he calmed down and thought about it, he realized that he would never be able to do that, so he decided to move to the southern island of Banjō Island with his parents.

“I know it's short notice, but ... ... then we'll have to have a farewell party.”

“Oh, great! Then let's play rock-paper-scissors to decide who's going to pay for the farewell party!”

“Whoa, whoa, whoa. Whoever wins will pay for it, right?”

“Hahaha, of course.” Masuru and Suguru laughed, and Shou felt a chill run down his spine as he panicked.

“Wait, wait, wait! I can' t believe you're doing this! It's my farewell party! How weird is it that I'm paying for my own farewell party?”

“What are you talking about? Calm down, Shou, the game isn't decided yet, is it?”

“That's right, Shou, all you have to do is not win. It's just a matter of probability.” Masuru and Suguru couldn't stop smiling.

“It's not fair! That's not fair! Both Masuru and Suguru know me well! That kind of probability doesn't apply to me...”

“Let's go! We've got to get out there and win, Rock-Paper”

“Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait!”

Pon.

“..... Yeah. I knew it. I knew it. I knew it.” As a result, it was Shou who won.

Without Himeko, the four boys played rock-paper-scissors. However, the game was decided in just one round, without a single scuffle. It was an overwhelming victory.

“Damn ... I think it's like telling me to pay from the beginning when it's decided by playing rock-paper-scissors ...!”

“Well, well. I'll give you a big send-off for that.”

“Yes, yes. Oh, and let's order a lot of pizza and stuff! You pay for it, of course!”

“Gunununununu ...!”

Shou clenched his teeth as he shook his frozen hands, while Masuru and Suguru ordered several pizzas on their cell phones, while Takeshi chuckled and said, “Oh dear.”

“Hey, you two, don't order too much. We'll at least pay for the sub menu and drinks. Also, before we get the pizza, we should help Shou with the cardboard boxes in his room. If we do that, maybe Shou will be willing to pay for it?”

“What? Oh, yeah. I guess so. If you can help me with that, well, ...”

“Damn. All right, I'll help you.”

“I'll help you out. Why the hell are we doing this .....?” Masuru and Suguru finished ordering the pizza while mumbling.

“Hmm. I've taken care of a lot of things for you so far, so please take care of the expenses, okay? Shou-kun?” Himeko said without sarcasm, but simply and honestly.

When she gave him a beautiful smile, Shou couldn't say anything else but smiled back.

The five of them arrived at Shou's house.

They decided to use Shou's room as the venue for the farewell party, but first of all, everyone except Himeko finished moving his belongings - a lot of cardboard boxes - to the front of the company house. Since they had already finished moving his parents' stuff, the Kukoma's were almost done. They returned to Shou's room to find only the study desk and chair that he had used since elementary school.

By that time, Shou was already thinking that it was okay to pay for the pizza since they helped him move out like this. It's always nice to be seen off, no matter what.

At that moment, the truck that Takeshi had called ahead of the pizza arrived in front of the company house.

“You stay here. Shou, Himeko, we're going to go downstairs and arrange the luggage.”

“Oh, yeah. Thanks, Takeshi, I'll leave it to you.”

“Yeah, okay.”

“Okay, let's go, Masuru. Suguru.”

“OK.”

“Yes, sir.”

Then he led Masuru and Suguru out of Shou's room.

The last thing he said was in a low voice that only Shou could hear.

“Shou, don't leave with any regrets.”

“Yeah, ...”

With a smile, he left.

Shou somehow understood the meaning of the word. Takeshi's gentle eyes made it so. (I see. ..... Surely this is my last chance ..... Thanks, Takeshi.....!)

There's something I've been meaning to tell you. There is something I've been meaning to say, something I've been holding on to. I want to tell you this feeling. I don't want to leave any regrets. I've been thinking about it, but I can't seem to come up with the words. Various phrases were swirling around in his head, but he couldn't get them out of his head and into his mouth. He felt itchy and frustrated.

“This room ... ... brings back memories. We used to play here whenever it rained. You know, me, Shou-kun, and Takeshi. Do you remember?”

“Uh, yeah.”

“... ... won't be able to do that anymore, will we? If Shou-kun disappears like this, I'll be ... ...”

Shou was flabbergasted.

Then Himeko showed a slightly sad expression on her face.

Seeing her expression, however, made Shou happy. Because he thought she was sad. He wondered if she cared about him at least a little. That's why he hoped for more words. But...

“I'm having trouble figuring out what to do with the ... ... menial tasks.”

“What?”

“What? What's the matter, Shou-kun? Why did you fall down in the middle of nowhere?”

“No, no, no, I was just surprised... ...”

“What? Hmm, you're weird, aren't you, Shou-kun?”

“Ah, ha ha ha... ...” He laughed and tried to cover it up, but he was indeed a bit shocked. So that's how it was. To be honest, he had felt that way himself, but it was hard to hear it from Himeko's mouth. Even though she was a natural “princess”, it still hit home.

“Well, there were a few other candidates. I'll tell Takeshi to find your replacement, so you don't have to worry so much, Shou-kun.”

“Haha... ... yeah, I see... ...” Shou has been in love with Himeko since he was a little boy. He wasn't sure if his feelings were truly romantic, but he knew that she was the most important girl in his life. That's why Shou was finally about to say the words.

“Oh, um, ...Himeko-chan!”

“Yes? What?”

“I, you know, I actually like ..... a lot! I really, really, really .....!”

He choked out in desperation.

But he just couldn't say the rest. He couldn't say the rest. His ears were burning with shame. He didn't know what to do. He almost panicked. That's when it happened.

“Are you trying to tell me that you like ... ... me, by any chance?”

“--Eh?”

“Yes. I like you too, Shou-kun.”

“Wha, wha, what?” This was a development that he never expected. He was dribbling desperately to get to the other team's goal, when suddenly the other team took the ball and scored a goal with a super-grade shot. Shou was dumbfounded for a while, and then his face broke into a smile because he was so happy.

“Shou is serious, thoughtful, and caring. I like Shou-kun because he is very capable as a handyman. But if you're talking about love, I'm sorry. I'm sorry, but I can't see you as such an object.”

“Himeko... ...-chan... ...”

“I couldn't live in this house. You know that, right? Shou-kun.”

There is not a millimeter of evil, no malice, no ulterior motive. It was just a simple, straightforward answer. That’s just how she responded.

“.....” At a loss for words, Shou had no idea what he looked like now. The only thing he could tell was that it wasn't a good look.

When Shou's shoulders slumped, Himeko said with an innocent smile, “Enjoy the tropical island.”

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“... ... Oh dear. So, this is what happened... ...” Takeshi, who was eavesdropping on the whole exchange between Shou and Himeko in the corridor, sighed a little with a rather complicated expression on his face.

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“..... Ugh.”

It had been a few days since Himeko had dumped him.

Shou was currently nodding off on a fishing boat, baking in the hot sun. The waves rose high in the sky, each time the boat shook, his body screamed.

“Oh, um, ... ugh. Are we there yet ... ...? Geez.” Shou asked while suppressing his nausea.

Then a white animal - a creature that Shou had never seen before, which looked like a combination of a cat and a rabbit - mewed cheerfully beside Shou, “Miaa!” Shou was a little upset, but the loveliness of the creature, which could be called a cabbit, soothed him and he regained his composure.

“Yeah, ... about another twenty minutes or so.”

“Oh, twenty more minutes .....”

The man who answered Shou's question was the man who operated the fishing boat. His name was Minamida.

Minamida was wearing a fresh, tropical aloha shirt, a hat, and sunglasses. His appearance seemed somewhat suspicious, but Shou could sense the “good person aura” overflowing from his whole body. This person was not a bad person.

“Oh, I'm sorry. We were supposed to fly by seaplane. If only it hadn't broken down at the last minute. I guess it's because I've been away from everyone for a bit... ...”

“Oh, I see... ... Ugh!

“Mia!”

At last, unable to stand the nausea, Shou hurriedly leaned over the edge of the boat, and one of the Cabbits rubbed his head anxiously. The other three poked and prodded Shou, playing on his back like a slide and tugging at his clothes.

“Hey, are you okay? Oh, look! I can see the island now!”

After being seasick for so long, Shou's nerves were at their limit. Minamida's words made Shou look up. And then he saw it.

“..... Wow!”

Shou's vision seemed to widen instantly.

The sea, which had somehow become clearer, was as beautiful as it was absorbing, and as they approached the island, he could see the colorful fish and corals. At the end of the line, there was the island they would reach.

“Meow!”

The cry of a cabbit drew Shou's attention to the white sandy beach and the four exotic girls standing on the breakwater made of natural stone and wood that stretched from the beach.

“Welcome to 'Banjō Island'! Welcome ～～～～!”

One of the girls waved her hands in the air, and Shou was stunned.

“Um, are those girls ...?”

“Yeah, they're residents like you. I hope you get along.”

“Maybe the residents ... ... are cherry-picked just to attract people...”

When Shou glanced at him, Minamida gave a small chuckle and reassured Shou that this was not the case. The boat finally arrived at Banjō Island.

It had been a long time since he had been on the ground, and Shou was impressed by the unshakable ground as he grabbed his luggage and headed down to the beach. The sun's rays dazzled his eyes.

The girls came running up to Shou with light footsteps.

“Nice to meet you! Hello! Welcome to Banjō Island~!”

The first to speak up was the girl who had just waved.

“What do you think of this island? It's so beautiful!”

The brown-skinned girl, who seemed to be full of energy suddenly said this to Shou, who looked around with blinking eyes. Shou's eyes widened as he looked around, and he was once again astonished by the power of nature. It was hard to believe that he was in Japan.

“Yeah, ... amazing. I'm really surprised. It's beautiful.”

“Yeah, yeah. Yes, yes, yes!” The girl smiled and laughed. The other three girls standing behind her also had cheerful expressions on their faces. It looked to Shou as if they were all in high spirits.

“We've been waiting for you! You're the last one to join! I know I'm late in introducing myself, but I'm Dird! I've been waiting for you for a long time!”

“Huh? What? - Ha, ha, ha, ha!”

The dark-skinned girl who suddenly picked up Shou's hand — She called herself Dird and laughed refreshingly with a childish smile. Shou couldn't immediately give his own name and nodded dumbly. Then, a little later, he said.

“Oh! I'm Shou, Kukoma Shou! It's nice to meet you!”

“Hmm, Shou? Nice to meet you, ～～～～!”

“Nice to meet you, too!”

Boom, boom, boom! Dird shook his hand up and down so hard that Shou almost got nauseous again.

“Oh, by the way, just now, you said something about me being the last participant in ... ...?

“Okay, okay, your turn is over. Come on, come on, come on.”

“Oh no! Hey, Alea! It's still my turn!”

“You're taking too long. I'm stuck behind you.”

Shou's words were drowned out in the middle of the conversation, and the girl who pushed Dird out of the way and came forward was the youngest of the four in terms of appearance.

The girl's gaze, staring at Shou, seemed to be assessing him, and she had a slightly cocky air about her. But there was no malice in it.

“My name is Alea, and although I'm the youngest of the four, I'm definitely the most decent and exceptionally talented. Oh, and if Dird gives you any trouble, just let me know. I'll take care of it.”

“Ah! What's that supposed to mean? I'm not going to put any trouble on Shou!”

“No, of course you won't. Of course you would. You're Dird, remember?”

“So what's the point of that ～～～～?”

While Dird and Alea were fighting and making a lot of noise, the other two girls came in front of Shou at about the same time.

“They're always like this. So don't worry too much about it.”

“Ah, yes. Umm. .....”

“I'm Apuesta, nice to meet you.”

“Yes, yes. It's nice to meet you too.”

Shou was somewhat uncomfortable with the nonchalant “voice” of the girl who called herself Apuesta, but he was more puzzled by the blush on her face as soon as he shook her hand. She seemed to be cool, but she was surprisingly shy.

“Fufu. I'm sorry for the sudden noise. My name is Palty. Life on this island may be confusing at first, but if you have any questions, don't hesitate to talk to us. Please.”

“Oh, thank you very much. ..... Well, it's nice to meet you.”

“Yes. I'd like to thank you as well. Incidentally, I'm the oldest of the bunch, but I'm still only eighteen, you know? I'm sure you'll be pleased to hear that ♪.”

“Yes, yes. .....”

“Fufufu ♪”

The last greeting, Palty, was a polite and respectful lady with a gentle smile and a soft demeanor. Her slightly droopy eyes made her look like a lady and gave her a noble impression. However, Shou felt that there might be a little intimidating part hidden in her .....

“Well, it seems that greetings are done, so let's go to the procedure first, Kukoma-kun.”

“Oh, yes.”

Before he knew it, Minamida had come down from the boat with his luggage, apparently waiting for Shou and the girls to finish their greetings.

Shou followed Minamida's lead and started walking with his little luggage in his hand.

“Oh no! Shou is leaving already?”

“It can't be helped. He’s just arrived. There are a number of formalities that need to be taken care of.”

“Dird, I'll see you later.”

“Fufu. Alea and Apuesta are right, Dird.”

“Mmmm. ..... Okay! Shou, we'll have lots to talk about later!”

“Oh, yes, yes.” (Is it possible that ..... I'm a little popular?) Shou's heart was filled with a kind of joyful anticipation in the open air of the tropics, but then...

“Actually, I asked them to take care of you while you get used to the island. So if you have any problems, please ask them for help. I'm sure they'll be able to help you.”

“What? Oh, really? ..... Haha, that's right, isn't it! Hahaha! (Why am I so excited? There's no way I'm suddenly going to be popular with the ladies. .....) Shou forced himself to smile to cover it up, but inwardly he sighed sadly.

The four girls saw him off, as he and Minamida headed for the far end of the docks - to a large bus that was parked there. Apparently, this was the place for the first procedure, and the side of the bus was marked with a cross indicating that it was a medical facility.

“You'll have to go through a brief physical examination here first. After that...”

“Hi! Welcome to the southern paradise of Banjō Island. We welcome you, Kukoma Shou-kun!”

“Wow! Wow!”

Shou was not the only one surprised, Minamida was too.

As if to interrupt Minamida's story, a blonde woman in a white coat came out of the large bus. She was tall, over six feet tall by Shou's estimation. She was also very glamorous, and Shou swallowed involuntarily at her feminine beauty.

“That ... Minamida-san. This is really Japan ... isn't it ...?”

That question was understandable.

The scenery of the island, which did not seem to be Japanese territory by any means, and the four exotic girls who greeted Shou. And then there was this blonde-haired glamour beauty, and if you just looked at it that way, this was a completely different world in a tropical country.

“I'm sorry, Kukoma-kun ....., she is the only doctor on the island, and she is also the teacher at the branch school.”

“Yes. You can call me Miron-sensei if you like. I’ll call you Shou-kun too.”

Yes, I'm ... ... It's nice to meet you.”

“Hi. Nice to meet you too.”

The two shook hands lightly, and Shou became a little suspicious of Miron's sexy body and voice. He couldn't look her in the eye properly.

“That .....? You're not from Japan, are you? Your Japanese is very good. Oh, by the way, those kids were really good too.” Now that he thought about it, he realized that Dird, Miron and the others were all speaking Japanese fluently.

“Well, you know. I'm just very good at this, you know. I can speak five languages in Japanese

alone.”

“What? What, five languages?”

“Standard Japanese, right? And Osaka dialect, Kyoto dialect, Okayama dialect, and Okinawa's peculiar language.” Miron counted on her fingers.

“I see. But that's not five languages, those are just dialects ... ...”

“Japanese is one of the most difficult languages to learn, but when you're as good as I am, it's just a little bit of fun. I'm afraid of my talent!”

“Ha, ha... ...”

Minamida said tiredly. “Miss Miron, I'd like you to give Kukoma-kun a physical examination as soon as possible... ...”

“Oh! I can't make a joke at all. OK, then Shou-kun, please take off your clothes for a brief examination.”

“Oh, yes. Um, just the top?”

“All of it.”

“Eh?”

“All the way down.”

“What?”

“And your pants and socks.”

“Eeeeeeeh?”

“Oh, light weight! Could you leave the socks alone, please? I'm more intrigued by them. ......”

Miron smiled dangerously at Shou, who was taken aback. Minamida was silent for a while, his puzzled expression clearly showing his dismay and confusion at Miron.

Perhaps because she noticed Shou and Minamida's expressions, Miron gave a short “huh” and then said with a slight hint of annoyance.

“What is it? It's just a little Japanese joke. You know, they say that jokes are universal! It's ... ..., so you don't have to be so stunned!

“... ..., huh. You really are ... ...” Nodding with his hand on his forehead, Shou quickly realized that Miron, the beautiful doctor and teacher, was a very unique and troublesome person to deal with.

Eventually, Shou became curious and asked Minamida in secret.

“Is that ......Miron-sensei really a teacher? Where the hell is ..... she from?”

“Hmm? Oh, America. She's a true genius, one of the smartest people in decades, who graduated from one of the top universities there at the age of twelve.

“What? ... ... eeeeee! Seriously?” Shou was really upset, he didn't think that someone who would suddenly make a joke out of thin air when he first met her would be so....

“Well, ... geniuses are a race of people that normal people don't understand in many ways... ...”

“..... That's kind of convincing, isn't it?

“I know.”

Shou and Minamida looked down at Miron, the genius who had started to write the character for “no” on the ground with them, and sighed, “Huh.”

Then Miron, who had been messing around, got back on her feet and the examination finally

began.

The examination in the bus was really very simple, just some palpation, x-rays, and finally a small pill, and it was all over in a flash.

“Thank you, Dr. Miron.”

“No, no. You should work on your body a little more. You'll never be able to satisfy a girl with such a sloppy body.”

“Ugh. .....”

“Oh, you're turning red. You're so cute.”

(I don't know if I like this teacher after all.) Shou hurriedly put on a t-shirt, sincerely thinking so.

“Thanks for your help, Kukoma-kun. So, Kukoma-kun, do you have a cell phone now?”

“What? Oh, yes. Yes, I do.” He took out a folded cell phone from his pocket and Minamida asked to let him keep it.

“Why?”

“I'm sorry, it's a rule. Besides, regular cell phones don't connect on this island. There are a lot of places where photography is not allowed... ... So I'm supposed to take care of the residents' phones.”

When he opened his phone, he found that it was indeed out of range. Shou was hoping to take some pictures of the island with his camera, but it was no use. He gave his phone to Minamida.

“Thank you, Kukoma-kun. Now that the tests are over, we can go to ... ...”

“Hey Minamida, I'm done, and after this, I'm going on a love-love date with you...”

“Kukoma-kun, you'll have to do the rest of the procedures at the facility over there! I'm busy with other work, but I've already asked Dird and the other girls to take care of the rest! So, I'll see you later, and thanks for your help!”

“Huh? What? Do you understand?”

“Shit! Wait, Minamida, are you trying to escape? You're going to leave me and run away?!”

“Whoa! Don't follow me! Miss Miron!”

Minamida and Miron talked to each other as they ran, and Shou could only look at them in dismay and smile.

“Hahaha..... Well, the continuation is in that building over there. Okay, let's go.”

After completing the formalities without incident, Shou officially became a resident of Banjō Island.

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“I'm a little tired. I knew it would be hard for me to go through the process by myself. .....” I can't wait to meet up with my parents. As he walked out of the building, mumbling to himself...

“Oh, there he is!”

”Hey, Shou~!”

“Huh? Whoa, Dird-san?”

Dird, Alea, Apuesta and Palty were waiting for Shou in front of the building. Dird's sudden embrace only confused Shou.

“Oh, you've finally finished the procedure! We've been waiting for you for a long time.”

“What? Oh, is that so? I'm sorry.”

“No, no, no need to apologize. You're tired of dealing with Miron, aren't you?”

As Alea grabbed Dird by the scruff of the neck, Shou nodded his head in agreement from the bottom of his heart. Dird and the others laughed at his honest reaction.

“Miron-sensei is so funny!”

“She's too funny for her own good, and I've got a problem with that.”

“I'm a little bad at ... ...”

“Apuesta tends to withdraw in front of the teacher.”

The reactions of each of the four of them spoke volumes about Miron as a person. Shou was convinced that he would stand out on the island.

“It's a disaster for ... ... Minamida to be liked by that person.”

“Hahahaha, that's so true.”

Alea agreed with Apuesta, and Palty smiled.

“By the way, Shou, have you talked to Minamida about the future? He told us to show you where you are going to live.”

“Oh, yes. I heard it earlier. I'm sorry. You went to a lot of trouble for me. Thank you very much.”

“Hmm. No, it's not. This is no trouble at all.”

“Thank you, ...”

Shou was really impressed by the good person, then Dird said, “Alright, let's go! She grabbed his hand and started running. Alea shouted, “Oh, my God, Dird!” Shou almost stumbled, but he kept his grip on Dird's hand and followed.

“Oh, by the way, I haven't asked you yet... Why are you doing this?”

“Dird is fine. Because Shou and I are classmates!”

“What? Classmates?”

When Shou's eyes fluttered, Apuesta followed suit.

“There's only one class in the high school, so we're all automatically classmates. The ages of the students are quite different.”

“Oh, I see. ... ... I see. There don't seem to be many children on this island, do there?”

“Yes, that's true. There are many parts of the island that have yet to be explored, so all the adults are busy with work... ... That's why Minamida-san asked us to be the guides for the newcomers, since we came to the island earlier and are already familiar with it.”

“I see. That's why you all should go to ... ...”

“Don't be so formal about it. You can call me Alea, too.”

“I'm Apuesta, ...”

“Please feel free to call me Palty, too.”

“Oh, yes, not ... ..., yes...” (It will take a little while before I can talk to them casually, but they all seem nice and kind), Shou thought with a still stiff expression. (I think that's the reason why I'm most nervous, because I've never been surrounded by girls like this before.)

“Come on, come on, let's go! We're losing daylight!”

“Whoa! Dah, Dird... Dird! Oh, don't pull too hard!”

“Damn. Dird's really excited, isn't she? She's like a dog that's excited to go for a walk, isn't she?”

“It's definitely like that... ...”

“Hmm, I guess so. It's going to get even noisier from now on.”

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“Hmm? Hey, Dird-chan. What is it? Are you here for shopping or something?”

“Oh, Grandma Tomi!”

Where Shou and the others were going - from a small general store in a small village - came an old woman with an elegant appearance. She seemed to be an acquaintance of Dird and the others.

When the old woman, called Tomi, made eye contact with Shou, her eyes lit up, “Oh,” she said. “Is this the new guy who arrived today?”

“That's right, Grandma Tomi, my name is Shou!”

“Shou? I'm Tomi. It's nice to meet you.”

“Yes, yes! It's nice to meet you, too!”

Shou bowed down to his waist and Tomi laughed lightly, “Ho ho ho!”

“Ahh! Hey, hey, look, look, everyone! Look! There are lots of new swimsuits!”

Dird called out loudly to Shou and the others, and pointed to a gorgeous display of colorful swimsuits, the symbol of summer. Especially the women's ones.

“This is so cute! I want one. There's something that would suit everyone, too. Like this one!”

“Hmm. But I'd rather have that candy than a bathing suit.”

“Huh? Ah! Alea would look good in this cute kid's swimsuit!”

“I'll blow you away, Dird!”

“What? Why? I was just being honest with you!”

As Dird and Alea started to make a fuss again, Apuesta also became interested in the swimsuits, saying, “... ... This is cute,” and even Palty was interested in the swimsuits, saying, “All of them have wonderful designs.”

Seeing the girls, Tomi said to Shou in secret.

“How about it, Shou-kun? Why don't you be a man and give the girls a swimsuit as a gift? I'm sure they'd love that.”

“Oh, a swimsuit? ... ... But I don't have any ... ...” If he could, he would have given her a present in style, but unfortunately, he didn't have that kind of money. Then he remembered that he had once tried to give Himeko something she wanted with his New Year's money.

Then Alea, who had been by his side for some time, grinned.

“What's the matter, Shou, you're a city boy from the mainland and you're not worthy? You'll never be popular.”

“Oh, Alea?”

“Oh, my God!”

Shou was slightly embarrassed by Alea's frankness, but Alea laughed and said, “I'm just kidding, don't look so embarrassed,” but it hit Shou hard as he had experienced similar comments from Himeko in the past.

“I'm sorry, Tomi. I'd like to see more of the stores, but I'm showing Shou around the island today, so I'll have to come back another time.”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah. Come by anytime. And you, Apuesta, are you there?”

“Yes.”

Apuesta, who had been carrying a large bag, came out after exchanging some words with Tomi. Shou took the bag from Apuesta, saying, “I'll hold that for you.” Apuesta thanked him a little shyly, saying, “Oh, thank you ... ...” Alea made a "hoo-hoo-hoo" sound, which made Shou feel embarrassed.

After leaving Tomi's store, the five of them walked through the village, which could hardly be called a town, passing by old, nostalgic houses and greeting everyone they met.

“It seems like ... ... only old people live here. Not many children, after all?” Shou's words were answered by Palty.

“The youngest ... ... are in their thirties, but they're all out fishing in the ocean and usually don't come home for months at a time. They do have children, but they are usually all playing together somewhere. We don't often see them.

“Oh, ..., I see.”

“And the population here is small compared to the size of the island. It gets a little busier in the evenings, but I'm sure it's a lot different than where ... ... Shou was.”

“I see... ...”

Apuesta's additional explanation convinced Shou that this island was indeed very different from

the place where he had been living.

“Shou~! This way, this way! Come on, we're almost there!”

“Hey, just relax, Dird.”

“I can't calm down!”

Alea, Apuesta, and Palty all smiled and said, “What can we do?”

Soon, terraced fields and rice paddies appeared, they passed through a hilly area with grazing livestock, and after crossing a small river, the scenery changed completely.

After climbing up the hill through the impressive giant trees, they found themselves in a dense jungle.

(I'm sure I'll get lost if I'm alone), Shou thought as he made his way through the tunnel of trees.

“Shou, over there! That's Shou's house!”

“What? Wow!”

As soon as his vision suddenly opened up, he saw a beautiful sea in front of him, reflecting the sun's rays. You could see the coral at the bottom of the crystal-clear sea. It was a spectacular sight.

“Whew, we're finally here! I'm so tired.”

“Yeah.”

“Yeah. Thank you all for your hard work.”

While Alea, Apuesta, and Palty wiped the sweat from their foreheads, Dird, still full of energy, pointed and said, “I'm not going to let you down.”

“Look, Shou, that's where Shou lives~... ..., huh?”

“What? Where? I mean, there's a house here?” Shou looked for a house where Dird was pointing.

But there was nothing but an empty plot of land. No, it's not even what you would call land. It was just cleared of weeds to some extent, almost like a campground. Right in front of them was the ocean. Shou thought that the only thing that could be found here would be a “beach house”.

“Where's ... ..., uh, where's my house?”

“Uh, ..., isn’t it?”

“No, there isn't. No, there isn't... ...”

All of them shouted after Dird.

As far as Shou could see, there was no architecture that looked like a house at all, although there were certainly some cardboard boxes that Shou had sent there earlier, but that was it.

“Well, ..., what do this mean?” Shou mumbled, unable to understand what was going on.

Suddenly, a huge squall started to fall from the sky. The sound of the rain hitting the trees and sand in the jungle echoed through the air, and they were all soaked in no time.

“I am soaked! What the hell is this? Rain squall!”

“Oh, come on, Shou, over here! We're going to get wet!”

Dird pulled Shou under a big tree, and Alea and the others did the same. There, Shou noticed that his beloved luggage was exposed to a lot of rain.

“Aaaaah! Oh, my luggage!”

“It's too late now. Give it up, Shou.” Alea's words were cruel. The cardboard boxes were now completely flooded.

“Shou... ... those packages arrived during the last regular delivery ... ...”

“... ... huh? Ah, Apuesta, that's ... ...” Shou noticed Apuesta's statement, which meant that it was likely that Shou's boxes had suffered from this squall damage many times in the days leading up to his arrival here. ... ...

“.....That's ～～～～!” The meaning of having Takeshi and his friends help him prepare for the move had been completely lost. .....

After the squall had stopped.

“Ah ... ..., the books, games, and players are all wiped out... ... They were all my favorites... ... The only thing that seems to be okay is the clothes, huh? ... ... My cell phone is gone, too... ... What in a mess... ...” Shou was deeply depressed as he went through his belongings. The rich cultural life in the tropics that he had dreamed of before he moved here was fading into obscurity. The only cultural possession that remained was the waterproof watch that Shou now wore on his wrist.

“Wow, people here carry their music data in this. I see. So, this is a portable game console. ..... Hmmm. But structurally, it's still sweet.” Alea took Shou's luggage - mainly machinery - and began to examine it with great interest. Apparently, she liked machines.

Then, Palty approached Shou with an apologetic look on her face. “Shou, about that ... ... Shou's house. Apparently, it was not prepared yet.”

“What, ...?” Shou couldn't believe his ears.

“It's probably ... ..., but there must have been some misunderstanding at the contract stage, because we were actually the same as Shou. When we arrived at Banjō Island, our house was not ready, and we had to live on the island for a while... ...”

“The same is true of ... ... It's the same as ... ... survival!?”

The confession caught Shou by surprise, and Palty nodded her head.

“Shou, do you have the Banjō Island residential planning pamphlet now?”

“Oh, yes.”

Shou took out a pamphlet of the island from his knapsack and handed it to Palty. Dird, Alea, and Apuesta had also gathered around. As they all looked at it, Palty opened it to a page with glittering pictures of luxurious houses with the latest facilities.

“Oh, yes, yes, this is it! Isn't this the kind of house you have in mind?”

As Shou pointed at the pamphlet, all four of them murmured, “I knew it.”

“What do you mean, “I knew it”? What? What is that sinister meaning?” Shou was confused, and Dird and the others looked away as if they were having a hard time saying something.

“Here, look here Shou.” The one who moved among them was Alea. The part she pointed to - in the corner of the pamphlet photo, there was a small note.

<This property is for reference only. Please make sure that you sign the contract and prepare your own accommodation in advance.>

“What?”

The letters were so small that you had to look very carefully to see them. It was also written in a light color. You'd have to concentrate like you were threading a needle to notice it.

Shou shivered and screamed. “It's a scam, ...!” He slumped to the ground, probably unaware that his parents were also unaware of this. How was he supposed to live without them? His mind was filled with confusion and turmoil.

“Haa... ... this is the time... ... What should I do now... ... hmm, what?”

Shou continued to agonize for a while, and then noticed that the three people besides Dird had disappeared before he knew it. And then he found them. The three girls were gathered nearby, whispering to each other. This was the place where Shou's submerged belongings had been stored.

“What? Hey Dird, I wonder what Alea and the others are doing over there?”

“What? I don't know. What is it?”

Dird and Shou looked at each other and wondered, then walked over to them.

Alea and the other two crouched in a circle and seemed to be looking at something.

Shou and Dird, curious, slowly approached them...

“No, but this guy seems to have a personality problem. He's definitely black-hearted.”

“Pretentious. .....?”

“Hmm... But does Shou like this kind of cute, big-breasted girls?”

What the three of them were eagerly looking at were some of Shou's “treasured items” that were now soaked... ... and were, after all, the boy's prized possessions... ...

“Woo-woo! Stop! STOP!!!” Shou rushed to the scene, and like an agile batsman with a safety bunt, he slid headfirst into the three of them, taking the treasure book with him.

“You can't look at these things without permission!”

Shou was on the verge of tears as he pleaded for help, and Alea apologized with a groggy, “I'm sorry,” and Apuesta and Palty's eyes darted to the side.

“What? What's that? What book is that? Shou, can you show me too?”

“No! Dird can't see it either!”

“What? Alea and the others have seen it, but they're not allowed! I want to see it too! I want to read Shou's precious book! It’s not fair!”

“No, no, no, no! Girls aren't supposed to look!”

“Buh! I don't understand! Shou's stingy!” Dird puffed out her cheeks childishly, Apuesta and Palty tried their best to calm her down, and Alea just smiled at her.

After retrieving the squishy treasure book from Alea and her friends, Shou was once again faced with a big question. How was he going to survive?

“Shou, I can understand your anxiety. But we are here for you.”

“... ... What?”

Palty said kindly. Dird continued.

“It's okay. That's right, it's going to be alright~ Shou! We're here for you just in case something like this happens! Just pretend you're on the Titanic!”

“That's all well and good, but you'll sink, you idiot.”

Dird slapped herself on the chest and exclaimed, “Ahem,” and Alea immediately shoved her. Shou regained some of his composure at the sight of the two, smiling.

“Well, ..., what are you going to do?”

When Shou asked, Dird said with a surprisingly voluminous chest, “Eh hem.”

“We'll set up your tent here! You can live in it for now!”

“... ... tent?”

“Yes!” Dird's smile was as bright as the sun, and it made Shou feel a little better.

“Well, I thought something like this might happen.”

“Yes. I've already prepared for it.”

“I wish I could have finished with the preparations, but ... ... it can't be helped. Let's all go back to the house to get our stuff.”

Palty clapped her hands and the girls nodded to each other, Shou said, “What? What?” Shou was left alone on the beach.

“I'm sorry, but you're going to have to wait here for a bit. We'll be right back.”

“What? Uh, yeah, ...” Shou could only nod.

Dird and the others started running towards the jungle and were soon out of sight.

Shou, who was left alone, zoned out for a while, then just looked out at the ocean by himself.

“... ... Haha. I wonder what's really going to happen now... ... Ah ha, ha ha... ... ...” His pitiful laughter was muffled by the sound of the waves, and Shou eventually collapsed and lay down on the beach.

That's when it happened.

“I'm back!”

“Whoa!”

Shou jolted up, startled by the sight of Dird's smiling face; it had probably only been a few minutes since Dird and the others had disappeared, but they had already returned with a large package.

“I'm back Shou~? What's wrong with you?”

“Oh, oh, welcome back to ... ... so early! It's only been about five minutes!”

“Well, don't worry about the details. Okay, let's play survival for the time being!”

“Yeah. I bought some seasonings at Tomi's store earlier... ...”

“That's great Apuesta, I told Minamida-san and Tomi-san about the situation while I was picking up my luggage, Shou, maybe they can do something about it.”

“Oh, yes, that's right, ... Thanks.”

“Here, here, Shou~! We'll do our best together, so cheer up! Hey! We'll do our best to survive together! It's fun when we're all together!”

“Sur, survival? What? Are we really going to do this? No, no, wait a minute!”

“There's no turning back now, Shou, if you're a man, do it!”

Shou was annoyed by Dird's innocent look and Alea's somewhat stern face. Until a few days ago, he had been living on the mainland, familiarizing himself with Japanese cultural life. He'd only seen survival on TV, and there was no way he could say, “Okay, I'll leave it to you... ugh!” with his hand on his cheek.

“Ugh, I want to go back to ... ... I've only been here one day, and I already want to go home!” For the first time in his life, he was a relaxed modern man who had lost his civilization.

Soon after, the tent that would be Shou's new home was set up, and he saw the various survival tools that Dird and the girls brought with them. There were also a few tools he had never used before, such as a harpoon.

“Well then, let's start by preparing lunch.”

“What? Lunch?”

“Yes. I've already prepared the ingredients.” Apuesta said, and she went on to open the bag that she had procured in the village and showed it to Shou. It contained rice and a number of seasonings.

“Rice and ... ... seasonings. Um, what about the side dishes?”

“Over there.” Apuesta pointed to the vast ocean. Only the great outdoors.

“There are a number of things you can eat in the jungle, but ... ... I think it's best to start with fish, Shou. Fish is a valuable source of protein, and it's easy to cook. “

“... ... Eh, that's... ...”

“Good luck with that...” Palty handed Shou a harpoon and a snorkel, which he accepted without a second thought.

“This is...? “

Palty smiled, Apuesta furrowed her brow in concern, and Alea grinned. Then Dird said, “Hai, hai!” holding up her hand.

“It's all right! I'll teach you how to harpoon!”

“... ... Are you serious?”

“Absolutely!”

“No, ..., but look, isn't there a restaurant or something in that village?”

“Hahahaha. There's no cafeteria, is there? This is it. Give it up, Shou, be a man.”

Alea put her hands on Shou's shoulders with a dry smile, Shou was appalled with his mouth open.

“... ... really ... ... are you ... ...?”

“Really, really.” Alea cut him off with a word, and Shou stood there aghast, holding the harpoon like some tribe he'd seen on TV. He seemed to know what he had to do.

“Let's see, all I have to do is put on this snorkel and go to ... ...! Okay!”

“You're looking pretty good, Shou!”

“Haha ... ... hahaha ... ... I seriously want to go home ... ...” He arrived at the island about two hours before. Shou had been dreaming of a refreshing life in a peaceful tropical country, but somehow, he found himself preparing to harpoon fish in the ocean. “Hahaha... ... haha... ...” He could no longer help but laugh.

“No way, no way, no way! There's no way I can catch a fish with a harpoon out of nowhere!”

Shou climbed out of the water with tears in his eyes, his lower body still in jeans because they were wet from the squall, but he had already tried for more than 30 minutes and hadn't caught a single fish. In fact, not a single fish has even been grazed by the harpoon. Shou had often seen performers harpooning fish on TV, but it was too difficult to do so in real life. There are lots of fish, but... ...

“Hahaha! Shou is so clumsy!”

“If it's your first time, I don't blame you... ...”

“Hmmm, you're right, since you're not Dird, I guess harpooning was too challenging right off the bat... ... Sorry, Shou.”

"Ugh~ ah, I'm so impatient! Give me Shou! I'll do it!" Dird's patience seems to have reached its limit, and she began undressing on the spot...

“Buh-hah! Wait, da-da-da-da-da-Dird!”

“Whoa! You idiot!”

“Oh, my God!”

“D-Dird, please calm down! Shou is here, too!”

Shou and the others rushed to stop her, but it was already too late, and Dird quickly stripped naked and snatched the harpoon from Shou. Shou covered his eyes with his hands, but Dird didn't even try to hide her body at all. She was apparently very excited.

“I'll show you how it's done! Watch me properly, Shou~!”

“What? I can't look at you when you're dressed like that...”

“Alright, I'll do it. ～～～～!”

It took a while after that for them to manage to seize Dird, who jumped into the sea like a wild child... ...

“Oh my god, why can't you catch it? I've taught you so much!”

“..... Guhu!”

Shou collapsed like a walrus at the edge of the waves, while Dird next to him seemed to still have plenty of energy and showed no signs of fatigue. She had tremendous stamina. Incidentally, all the girls were wearing swimsuits that they had apparently prepared beforehand, and their clothes were being hung out to dry on a tree. All of their swimsuits were a bit old-fashioned, and Shou could understand why they wanted swimsuits from Tomi's store.

“Shou, I'm going to teach you all about harpooning tomorrow! You have to become a professional to survive! Do you understand?” She put her hands on her hips and said, “Mmm!”

Shou weakly replied, “I understand ... ...,” but he couldn't help but wonder if he could really continue living like this.

“Well, Shou, you might want to start with some shellfish. There are a lot of rocks here, so you can get a lot of shellfish. There are also crabs and shrimps.”

“Uu... ... I'll do that... ...”

He couldn't help but burst into tears at Palty's gentle guidance. However, the main reason for his tears was his shame at not being able to catch a single fish after all this effort. Dird, who was no older than he was, was catching fish one after another, and he felt so pathetic.

A few minutes later.

Dird went to the ocean to catch some fish, while Alea, Apuesta, and Palty went to the jungle to get some wildflowers and mushrooms. The girls did most of the work, but Shou also contributed by picking up some shellfish. Then the cooking began in no time. The first thing to do was to start the fire.

“Okay, Shou? You have to do it yourself from now on, and you have to at least learn how to set things up. In particular, you need to learn how to start a fire. In this place, if you can't handle the fire well, it could be fatal.”

“Uh-huh. I understand... ...” Gulping, Shou swallowed hard at Palty's serious face.

“Hmm. Then please try it.”

“Yeah. Well, first of all, stand this up and turn it... ...”

Shou tried to start the fire as Palty had taught him. It went pretty well at first, but he got so caught up in blowing on the sparks that he accidentally burned his bangs in the fire that suddenly erupted.

“Whoa! Ow! Aow! Ugh, what should I do!”

“Whoa, whoa. You've done it, haven't you?” Alea laughed out loud. Apuesta was frightened, and Palty hurriedly put a wet rag on Shou's hair.

“My apologies, Shou; I neglected to tell you that fires can flare up suddenly and significantly. That was my mistake. Please let me take the blame for this.”

“No, no, it's fine.”

“But, but... ...”

“Haha, I'm really fine. Thanks for worrying about me.”

“Oh, I see... ... I understand. I'm really sorry, Shou.” Palty bowed her head apologetically until the end, her polite manner made Shou feel as if Palty was a young lady from a good family.

“That's right! Hey, hey, Shou! Since we're here, let's cut your hair~!”

“Huh?”

And Dird took out a pair of scissors, making them jiggle.

The moment Shou was about to say, “Wait a minute,” Dird had already put the scissors into Shou's bangs without hesitation and cut them off without any effort. She then proceeded to cut the surrounding area with a crisp and vigorous cut. It was something she was used to.

“What? What? Whoa! You're cutting too much!”

“Haha. But it's cool.”

“... ...? Oh, yeah?”

“Damn. I was going to laugh at you for a second, but I think that might be better.”

“Oh, really? Alea?”

“I think it might be a little more masculine... ...”

“Oh my, you're right. I think it's definitely wilder, Shou, and better looking.”

“Yeah, is it? ... ... I see! That's fine then, not really! Hahaha!” Shou, a simple man who got carried away by the praise of beautiful girls, was beginning to break down in a good way.

Eventually, the food was ready and Shou was able to have his first real meal of the day.

A meal in the great outdoors, surrounded by sky, sea and forest. The colorful fish were baked or steamed and the warm steam from the hot, white flesh whetted his appetite. Shou's stomach rumbled incessantly as he gobbled up his meal.

“..... Phew! Yummy! This fish is so delicious! Especially this one! Sashimi!”

“What?”

Alea, Apuesta, and Palty were astonished by Shou's words. However, only Dird's face brightened up.

“Isn't that right? I'm so happy. ～～～～! I thought Shou would definitely understand! You're so Japanese! If you're Japanese, you should eat sashimi!”

“Yes! That's so true!” Shou agreed, and the two were impressed by the taste of fresh sashimi dipped in a little shoyu.

On the other hand, Alea, Apuesta, and Palty stared wryly at the sashimi spread all over the banana leaf as it was reduced one by one.

“Wow, ..., what a mess. We've got another horrible raw fish eater on our hands, hey ... ...”

“Oh, that's horrible.”

“It's raw, ... raw and crunchy like that, ... raw fish, ... raw fish!”

“What? What, all three of you don't like it?”

Alea and the others nodded their heads. It seemed that the three of them were not fond of sashimi.

Shou thought back, “I've heard that many foreigners don't like sashimi,” and felt a little conflicted.

“Hmmm! It's so cute that Alea and the others don't know how good sashimi is!”

“Hey Shou, if you're straining to fit in with Dird, stop it! This girl has a weird habit of eating everything raw, not just seafood, in thin slices. You don't have to go out with her!”

“Don't worry, I'm fine. Thanks, Alea.”

While they were talking about sashimi, Apuesta was neatly slicing the red fruit she had picked from the jungle in front of Shou.

“Shou, try this one too.”

“Oh, thank you. Let's see... ... ... mango ... ... -ish, but what is it? I'll have a bite.” He bit into it. Shou's eyes widened with excitement at the taste. “Oh...! This is amazing! This is so good! I've never had it before!”

“Good ... ..., this is a specialty of this island.”

“Thank you Apuesta, it's really delicious!”

Apuesta had a small smile on her face, and although she rarely changed her expression, it made Shou happy to see her smile. She ate one of them in one go.

“Hmm, Shou, there's still some left here. You must be tired today, so please eat a lot to prepare for tomorrow.”

“Uh-huh. Thank you.”

Palty served up a number of fish, shellfish, and wild greens. It was all really delicious, and a wild meal like he had never experienced on the mainland.

“Ehehe. It tastes so good when we eat together! Shou!”

“Don't casually take my turban shells while saying that, Dird!”

“Ow, that hurts! You don't have to hit me!”

“Hey, hey, you two! You shouldn't be fighting!”

“... ... too noisy.”

Palty interceded between Dird and Alea, and Apuesta breathed a small sigh.

Shou couldn't hold back his laughter at that scene.

In the middle of their meal, Shou asked something that was bothering him.

“Oh, by the way, I heard earlier that you guys went through the same thing I did. What happened to your houses? You're living a normal life now, right?”

“Yeah! Well... Mine took about two weeks to get here!”

“Mine was ... ... for about a month. But I had survival training, so I was able to get by. I hope you don't mind.”

“It took almost two months at my place.”

“I see. ... ... I wonder what will happen to mine... ...” Shou murmured anxiously as he listened to Dird and the others' replies. It was natural, since he had never dreamed that his house would not be prepared.

“Oh, how long did it take you to get Apuesta's place?”

“I ... ... three ... ... weeks ... ...”

“... ...What?” At that moment, Shou felt a strange sense of discomfort. Apuesta's speech was different from before. It was kind of really slow and the words were choppy. It was as if her voice was delayed.

“Uh, what? Apuesta? Apuesta? Are you okay?” Shou was worried, thinking that she might not be feeling well.

Apuesta seemed to be convinced by Shou's question and reached for an abacus-like object that was placed to one side. It was the one Apuesta had been wearing since the first time they met.

Apuesta tapped the abacus with her nimble fingers, and then...

“I'm sorry. I can't talk well without this.”

“Whoa!” Shou was surprised, because Apuesta's mouth was not moving at all right now.

“What? Huh? Huh? Well, right now, Apuesta's mouth wasn't moving, like ... ...? And yet, I think she was talking... ... I'm not sure. Is it a mistake? I'm not sure if you're a ventriloquist or something.

That's when Shou finally realized. This was the true nature of the strange feeling he had felt towards Apuesta in the beginning.

Alea said with an amused smile, “Of course not, you idiot.”

“What's the matter, Shou, you didn't notice it before? Hey Dird.”

“Yeah, Apuesta, can I borrow that for a second?”

“Okay, but don't be too rough.” Apuesta's voice was indeed heard, but her mouth was not moving. It was a strange sight.

Then Dird took the abacus device borrowed from Apuesta and tapped it with a sloppy, fumbling hand.

“Ko..... n..... ni..... chi..... wah, wah.”

Apuesta's voice sounded very faltering. Apuesta herself blushed at the strange voice.

“You suck at this. Here, give it to me!”

Next, Alea took the abacus and started to play it.

“Ho..... ra ..... me ..... is ..... faster. It's ..... faster ..... than ...., right?”

It was definitely somewhat faster than Dird's, but it still wasn't a natural voice.

It was at this point that Apuesta's sense of shame reached its limit, and with a flushed face she took the soroban from Alea. Then she played the abacus at a level of speed incomparable to that of Dird and Alea.

“Yes, that's it! It's my precious thing, don't use it as a toy!” Apuesta turned her head away, her voice unusually angry. Dird and Alea laughed, and Apuesta raised her eyebrows.

“Hmm, surprised? Shou, Apuesta usually speaks with that soroban-shaped vocal device.”

“Vocalizer ... ..., I didn't know that. It's an amazing thing.” Shou was surprised at the shocking revelation, while Apuesta squirmed, perhaps embarrassed and not looking at him.

Then Alea added an explanation.

“Apuesta's mind is very fast, and that's why her words don't follow her. It seems that she's constructing a language in her head, but because she's thinking so quickly, she can't speak well because she's already thinking about the words she's going to say.”

“What? How is that possible?”

“No, it's just a theory I've been forced to put together (lol).”

“You're lying! I believed you for a second!”

“Hahaha! Anyway, Apuesta just isn't very good at speaking for herself. I think it's better to ask Apuesta directly for more details, don't you?”

<glance>

They all looked at Apuesta, who shrunk back and looked back with trepidation. Then, without tapping her soroban, she opened her mouth.

“..... not ..... another ..... but ..... also ..... talk ..... make ..... but .....”

Then she tapped her soroban to say the rest.

“It's faster to talk this way, Shou, so if you can, don't worry about it too much.”

“Oh, um, yeah. Sorry.”

Maybe there's something wrong. It would be rude to ask so much when you've only known each other for a short while. So Shou made up his mind not to ask any more questions about the soroban.

Noticing Shou's thoughtfulness, Apuesta murmured, “Thank you,” and played her soroban furiously, her face still red.

“... ... is still a bit angry, so I think I'll talk in Dird's voice for a while.”

“Wha! In Dird's voice now! You can even do that!” Shou was surprised by the sudden voice transformation, but the one who was most surprised was Dird herself.

“Whoa, whoa, stop it! It's so creepy! It's like I'm here and also there! It's so creepy! ～～～～!”

“No. I'm not going to stop for a while. It's punishment for playing with this.”

“No, please stop! Please stop! I won't do it again, please let me go!”

“Phew, I'm glad Apuesta's anger is directed at this idiot: ... ...”

“Of course, I can make it sound like Alea.”

"Wow, I feel sick! Please stop, please, I' m sorry. Forgive me Apuesta!"

“Hmm. You're as noisy as ever, aren't you? Please apologize to Apuesta, both of you. She's scary when she's angry, you know?”

“No, I think the scariest one is Palty...”

“Alea, did you just say something?”

“No, I didn't say anything!”

With the four of them looking like they were having such a good time.

“... ... Pfft. Aha! Hahahahaha!” Forgetting the pain of survival, Shou couldn't help but burst out laughing.

After finishing the meal and cleaning up, Shou was hit by a sudden urge to have a bowel movement.

“Shou? What's wrong, are you so fidgety?”

“Oh, um, ...”

Dird asked him, but he was too embarrassed to answer.

However, Alea and the others soon figured it out.

“Shou, we don't have a bathroom here. Why don't you just go to the jungle?”

“What?”

As soon as Alea said that Apuesta quickly and silently handed him a few large leaves.

“... ... I'm supposed to wipe with these?”

Apuesta averted her gaze and blushed, Shou now seriously wanted to go back to the mainland.

"Shou, if you don't like the jungle, you can go in the ocean. You can wash it right there, and it's convenient for a lot of things."

“What, what? In the sea?”

Shou was surprised by Palty's bold statement, but Dird continued with a pleased look on her face.

“Yes, yes! It feels good to do it in the ocean too~ Ugh, Shou saying that makes me want to do it

too.”

“Then go with Shou. You can hide behind those big rocks over there.”

“Yes... I'll be back.”

Before he knew it, Shou's hand was in Dird's. He said, “What?” The next thing he knew, Dird was pulling him towards the shade of the rock.

“What? What? Dird, Dird, Dird! What? I'm with you!”

“Whoa! Are you seriously taking me with you?”

“No, Dird!”

“Wait, Dird, you can't do that when we just met!”

Shou was in a hurry, but Alea and the others came from behind to stop him, which saved his life. Shou was terrified to think about it.

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“Well, Shou, that's it for us. We'll see you tomorrow.”

“Ah, yes. Thank you so much for today. Thanks to everyone for helping me out.”

“See you later, Shou~! See you later! Shou, see you.”

Palty said goodbye to Shou on behalf of the group, and Dird, Alea, and Apuesta got up and waved goodbye to each other. The red sun was already shining brightly outside.

Just as Dird and the others were about to leave, Minamida arrived with the old woman he had met in the village, Tomi, pushing a bicycle.

“Oh, Minamida-san, Tomi-san!”

“Hi, Kukoma-kun. I'm sorry, I've been working too long and I'm late coming to check on you. But it looks like the girls were able to help you out a lot. I'm really glad I left it to them... ... I never expected this to happen... ...”

Minamida said, looking around at the tents, the food, the garbage in the holes, etc. Shou said, “Yes.” He remembered the hard work he had put into the harpooning.

“Thanks for your help, Shou-chan, you can eat this tonight or tomorrow morning.”

“Oh, thank you so much!”

Tomi handed him a bowl of stewed rice. Shou's face lit up with excitement, and Tomi smiled when she saw it.

“Thank you so much for your hard work. So, I know you have a lot of questions for me, but how about ... ...?”

At Minamida's words, Shou's expression hardened. He vented his frustration to Minamida, which he had to keep bottled up for a long time.

“That's right! What the hell is this? You can't just leave my belongings in a place like that and expect me to get a ... ... house by myself, isn't that too much? It's already the work of a villain to just leave such an important thing written in such a small place!”

“No, there's a little bit of a difficult situation with that that I can't explain in words... ... And the reason you don't have a home here is because of the sudden decision to accept immigrants, ..., and then.” Minamida looked away, looking unhappy, and continued.

“As soon as Palty contacted me, I checked with your parents. But it seems that ... ... they misunderstood a lot. There were a lot of mistakes in the paperwork. I'm sure I explained to them about preparing a house when they signed the contract... ...”

“Oh ... ..., so that's what happened?”

“Yes. It's just that both of your parents were really high strung and seemed to be very excited about it. So, I don't mean to be rude, but I think they didn't really listen to what we had to say when they signed the contract... ...”

“Oh, ...” At Minamida's words, he thought back. The two of them, when they had insisted that they wanted to emigrate.

“.....” And then he thought. (I'm sure they were only half listening to the contract because they were so happy about it.)

“I just finished checking that fact just now. But you've already arrived at our island, and we can't just send you away again on a boat trip that will take two days, can we?”

“Uh ... ... that's ... ...” The feeling of seasickness came back lightly when he was told that. Surely that trip on a pontoon boat was too hard. (I think I'd rather live in a tent than do that.) That's what Shou sincerely thought.

“There's no such thing as lodging on Banjō Island... ... It's short notice, and we don't have any houses or facilities to accommodate you. So, I'm going to do my best to ask Dird and the others to help your stay with us. I'm also going to support you as much as I can. So can you please forgive me for that ... ...?”

“... ... I didn't know that.”

Minamida must be desperate. The sweat glistening on his forehead and the expression on his face told of his honest nature.

“Yeah, but don't worry. We've already finished the lifeline construction around here too. Now all we need are the house unit materials and the builders to come, and we'll have the house up and running relatively soon.”

“Eh? Is that so! Then I want them to hurry up!”

“Yeah, okay. But until then, I'm going to have to ask you to live a life of survival here, but ... ... can you do your best? Your parents will send money to cover the minimum needs of rice and seasonings, and there are plenty of other ingredients on the island. You can think of it as a little camping trip. ... ...”

“... ... Ca, camping? ... ... Ugh ... ...”

“I'm really sorry ... ... Oh, yes. I'm the island manager, and my house is the only one with a mainland phone line, but ... ... I just received a call from your parents.”

“What? Oh, really? What did they say?”

“Yeah, I got a fax sent to me. Here's what it is: … ...”

This was the first time Shou had ever received a fax, and when he opened the curled-up piece of paper...

“Hey, Shou! How are you doing? I'm sorry that your mom and dad made some mistakes. Because of that, it's going to be a while before we can get there. They've already made arrangements for you to change schools, so you'll have to work hard there. Your father trusts that you will live a good life. See you there! P.S. I can't send much money. Sorry.” That's what was written on the fax form.

“.....” Shou was speechless as he opened his mouth, and Minamida and Tomi looked at each other somewhat apologetically.

“Oh, ... well, Kukoma-kun, we'll help you as much as we can. So...” Minamida was desperately trying to comfort him.

Although he had a lot of thoughts, Shou had already accepted the situation. So he responded, “... ... Huh. I understand. I'll try my best.”

“Oh, thanks for the ... ...! Thank you for being so understanding... ... Thank you so much.”

(It's a pretty absurd situation, but ..... but I'm used to this kind of unreasonable development from my dealings with Himeko-chan, Takeshi and Masuru and Suguru..... haha) Shou breathed a small sigh as he thought about this.

“... ...Huh. But if this is the case from the first day, it seems impossible to suddenly tell Kukoma-kun about the situation... ... I guess we'll have to wait until next week... ...”

“What? Minamida-san? Did you just say something?”

“What? Oh, no, it's nothing. I was just talking about this.”

Shou wondered a bit as Minamida mumbled to himself in a whisper, but Minamida only laughed and said, “Hahaha.”

“So, Kukoma-kun, I'm going to let you get used to living on this island first, and I was wondering if we could make some time to talk properly in a week or so. I'm sure we'll make some progress by then, and there's a lot of things I want to talk to you about.”

“A week from now? Yes, I understand. Um, what do you want me to do about the place?”

“You should be fine here. As for the time, well, ... it might be a little late due to my work, but how about around nine o'clock at night? As long as it doesn't bother Kukoma-kun, of course.”

“Nine o'clock, huh? I'll probably be awake, so I think I'll be fine.”

“I see. Well then, one week later. Wait for me here at nine o'clock in the evening. Do you have a watch?”

“Yes, I do. My watch, fortunately, is waterproof. Somehow.”

“I see. Well, I'll see you then.”

Shou made a promise to Minamida, whereupon Minamida gave a short “ah” and switched the subject.

“Yes, Kukoma-kun, there's actually a bit of construction going on nearby tonight. It might get a little noisy, but the site is dangerous, so I want you to stay here and not go out tonight. Besides, it's not safe in the jungle at night.”

“Construction... ... Yes, I understand. I'll try not to go out.”

“Yeah. I'll come back to check on you. I've already told the people in the village about you, so if anything happens, I'm sure they'll be able to help you if you go to the village. Isn't that right, Tomi? Tomi-san.”

“Yes, I'll leave it to you. Oh, yes, Shou-chan. Here, use this.”

“What? What is it?”

Tomi handed him a set of three plastic containers in a ... ... plastic bag.

“This is ... ... I mean, we don't have a bath or anything, so this is it!”

“Ho ho ho. It's biodegradable, so it's safe. Even if you wash it directly in the ocean, it'll be fine. There are hot springs in the mountains over there, but you can't walk there from here.”

“Hahaha. Well, it's warm all year round on this island, and you're young, so I'm sure you'll be fine.”

“Wow, what a survivalist ... ...”

“It won't be a problem once you get used to it. I'm sure Tomi and I will bring you some more food. I hope you manage to hang in there.”

“Yes,” Shou nodded, then he asked about the presence next to Minamida.

“Oh, by the way, is that your bike, Minamida-san?”

“Huh? Oh shoot, I forgot about this one too. This is for you, too.”

“Huh?”

Minamida popped the worn-out red mountain bike and slowly laid it down on the sand. It was probably because he couldn't get it to stand on its stand on the sand.

“That's what I used to use. I'll give it to you as a gift since you're not very mobile.”

“Yeah, but is it okay?”

“Yeah. You came here at noon through the jungle, right? That way is definitely a shortcut, but it's hard work. It's easier to get to the island's administration building and docks if you come around this side of the beach. It's a hand-me-down, but it's also off-road capable, so you can use it if you want. I hope this at least atones for my sins... ...”

“Well, thank you very much! I'll take good care of it!”

“Yeah. If you break it, you can have Alea take a look at it. Yeah, a friend of mine can fix it in no time at all.”

Minamida smiled happily, apparently reminiscing about the old days, while Shou lightly touched the mountain bike on its side and said, “Nice to meet you today.”

“Mya!”

“Wha?”

A Cabbit on Minamida's shoulder jumped off and landed lightly in front of Shou. It then placed something in front of Shou.

“Hmm? ... ... Ah! Is this a fruit from this island?”

Then another one dexterously placed a fruit in front of Shou, which she was holding with her ear. It was the sweet and sour fruit that Apuesta had told him was a specialty of the island. Then they both looked up at Shou and mewed adorably, “Miah.”

“Haha. It seems to mean, “Eat this and hang in there! That's what they said.”

“Haha, thanks for the ... ... I'll take good care of it.”

As Shou thanked the Cabbits, Minamida and Tomi each gave a small smile.

That night.

After sorting out his belongings, Shou made a fire under the starlight as Dird and her friends had taught him and had dinner alone by the light of the lamp with a main dish of rice, miso soup with clams, simmered vegetables brought by Tomi, and dried fish.

“... ... It's still a little lonely when you're alone.”

A meal on a sandy beach with a spectacular view should be very tasty, but it was somewhat tasteless. It was very different from when he had eaten with Dird and the girls at lunch. The light from the fire was also somewhat sad.

Putting the bowl of rice aside, Shou lay down and looked up at the night sky.

“Wow, ... the sky is so bright. It's so different from the mainland... ...”

The star-filled sky was so beautiful that it almost sucked him in, and he never got tired of looking at it. (If I could see such a starry sky, I would be happy to come to this island.) He thought.

“.....Wow, bugs! Hey, go away, go away!”

An insect flew from the jungle and landed on his stomach, and Shou hurriedly swatted it away with his hand. The bug quickly flew away, but it was still in the wilderness.

“... ... Huh. There are a lot of insects, the only house is a small tent, it squalls, I can't play games, I can' t listen to music, and all my comics are soaked ... ... How long do I have to live like this ... ...?”

It was far from the elegant life he had expected. At first, Shou was able to enjoy the camping atmosphere, but when he thought about it alone and calmly, he realized that he would have to continue living like this until his parents came and built a house. This was a great stress and hardship for Shou, a modern child who had lived a culture-free life on the mainland until now.

He felt a strong desire to go home right now if he could.

“There's no point in dwelling on it... ... I'm going to bed today anyway. I'm already tired from this morning!” With that last soliloquy, Shou put out the fire and the light of the lamp and went inside the tent to sleep.

The quiet sound of the waves immediately lulled Shou into a comfortable sleep. ……

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“... ... hmm. Hmmm ... ...?” Shou fell asleep and a few hours passed.

Perhaps because he went to bed early, Shou woke up in the tent. When he went outside, it was still dark and apparently there was still a lot of time left until morning.

“Huh ... ..., what time is it ... ..., huh?”

Just then, Shou noticed a heavy “zwoon” sound coming from far away. It sounded like an explosion, and he wondered if there had been an accident at the construction site.

“Oh, ..., that's right, Minamida-san told me about that. There's dangerous construction going on, so I should stay away from it, right?” Shou obeyed the lesson, but then his body trembled.

“... ... Huh. There's no bathroom here, right? ... ... Okay, since I'm here, I think I'll try the ocean from that high place over there. Heh, no one's going to see it anyway.” With the innocence of a child who has come up with a devious plan, Shou headed for the small cliff near the tent.

After arriving safely at the cliff top, Shou looked down at the sea, which was a little scary in the darkness, but the surface of the water reflecting the stars was very beautiful.

Shou was mesmerized by this beauty and tried to do his business, but...

“..... hmm?”

Then he noticed that there was a person ahead of him on the cliff.

The person's face was obscured by the darkness, but just then the moonlight from the thin clouds illuminated the person.

Shou was startled.

“What? Dird!”

Yes, it was Dird.

But her appearance was different from the daytime. Her clothes were tattered, and she was half-naked, and she was smiling at Shou as if inviting him to go to the beach.

“Dird....., right? What are you doing here at this time of night? And you look so .....” He called out to her, but she didn't respond. Dird's grin seemed somewhat creepy, and Shou stopped in his tracks. He had a bad feeling about this.

Then, Dird thrust it at Shou, which she had hidden behind her back.

“—What?”

Shou was scared and stiffened his body.

What Dird was pointing at ... ... it was a silvery muzzle. It was the first time he had ever seen a real gun.

“Da, Dird?”

Dird silently smiled a cruel smile at Shou, who couldn't keep up with his understanding, and easily pulled the trigger...

“!”

And that's when Shou braced himself.

When Shou prepared himself, a number of streaks of light flashed from behind him, and the rays of light passed through Shou's side and attacked Dird.

Then, a mysterious substance appeared around Dird as if trying to protect her - a kind of humanoid energy body - caught the ray, but it couldn't prevent it, or perhaps it couldn't block

the ray from hitting Dird's right arm, which was holding the gun, and cruelly blew it off from the base.

“Ugh! Aaaaahhhh!” Dird wobbled and twisted on her feet, leaving behind a high-pitched scream as she fell off the cliff into the sea.

“... ... Dird? Da, Diiiiird!” Shou ran to the edge of the cliff, but Dird's body had already disappeared into the dark sea.

Then another light - a humanoid energy body similar to Dird's - came from the sky, and a girl on it let out a small “oops”.

“What? Oh, Alea.....?”

What Shou saw was Alea, a girl who looked a little cocky.

She clicked her tongue lightly and took a glance at Shou, who noticed her, but did nothing in particular and flew off somewhere.

“... ... What, this?” Shou mumbled as he sat back down.

—At that time, he felt a slight discomfort in his neck. It felt like something was pressed against it.

“... ... What?” His body would not listen to him. Shou, lying prone, moved his neck slightly and looked behind him with his sideways eyes. Someone was standing there. However, he couldn’t see their face. Only the sound of the ..... waves carried Shou's consciousness away into the depths of darkness....

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“... ... Kukoma, Shou-san ... ...” The top of the cliff. There was a girl staring at the unconscious Shou.

She had hidden herself in the trees of the forest earlier, and she just mumbled quietly with anxious eyes.

“... ... I'm sorry.” Those were words of apology. It was the only thing she could do. But of course, her whisper couldn't reach the sleeping Shou. The girl continued to stare at Shou for a while.

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“Well, has he arrived safely?”

“Yes. It's quite a hassle, even though I can prepare a replacement.”

The place where Shou and the others had been was completely different from this place, a dark room with no discernible location.

A beautiful woman in a white lab coat - a woman named Miron - was standing there.

“As long as we can check your genes and your body at the nano level, there's no point in trying to switch you, Uncle.”

She was apparently having a conversation with her superiors. However, Miron's demeanor seemed to take them lightly, and there was no hint of nervousness or awe.

“You don't have to tell me that, I know that! What I'm saying is that since he is our representative, he should have the right to make that choice!”

“Well, well, it can't be helped. We weren't even originally qualified to participate. Considering that, isn't this case a fortuitous one?”

“Yes, it is. There's no point in being greedy. Besides, it's not like he's decided to join yet. I'd like you to be well aware of that again.”

“Mmm ... ... that's true, but ... ...”

“Anyway, first of all, we have to get him to recognize the importance of the matter. May I leave it to you to do that? Young lady - no, Miron Pham.”

After a beat or so, Miron nodded. “—Yes. Yes, Uncle Foxey♪”

“Miron, you are such a bitch!”

Miron laughed and cut the communication just as the shouting was about to become too much.

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“... ... U... ... ... Shou... ... ... Shou!”

“U ... ... Ummm, ugh ... ...”

“Shou! Shou! Shou～～～～～～!”

“U... ... ugh ... ... hmm?”

Shou slowly opened his eyes and saw a girl standing in front of him. Apparently, she had come to wake him up.

“Oh, you're finally awake! I guess Shou is a real sleepyhead~”

“... ... dah, doh?”

“Hm? That's right, it's Dird, right?”

“.....”

At that moment, the memory of before he fell asleep came back to him. The sight of Dird screaming and falling down the cliff, and someone who looked like Alea...

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!”

“Whaaat? What's going on? You scared the hell out of me! Dird jumped in disbelief, probably because Shou had suddenly started screaming.

“Ah, ah, ah!”

Dird just cocked her head and stared at him.

“Shou, Shou~? What's wrong? Did you have a scary dream? Do you want me to give you a pat on the head?”

“... ... Yuh, a dream?”

“Yes. You're sweating like crazy. Are you okay?”

“Yeah, uh, ... 1...”

Dird came up to him and looked into his face with concern.

After calming down a little, Shou realized that he was sweating all over and lightly wiped the sweat from his face with his arm and thought as his head began to cool down.

“Here ... ... my tent ... ...”

“Yes, it's Shou's tent, right?”

Yes. It was inside Shou's tent. His soaking wet luggage was on the floor, and he seemed to be sleeping in the sleeping bag Minamida had given him.

“... ... Ah.” Then he realized.

The girl in front of him with the innocent expression on her face was definitely Dird. And Dird's arm, which had been blown off last night, was definitely still there. It's the very same girl's arm, without a single scar and with a beautiful wheatish tan.

“... ... I see. I'm glad ... ... that was just a dream... ...”

Dird said, “Haha. The only thing Shou can do is to cover it up with a “sorry””.

“Oh, um... ... ... Let's see... Shou?”

“Oh, yeah, what?”

“Well, um, you know...”

<Glance>

He noticed that Dird's cheeks had turned slightly red.

And her gaze was wandering restlessly, occasionally turning towards Shou... towards Shou's lower body...

“... ... Geez!”

“Oh, I'm going to go catch some fish for breakfast!”

With a slight blush, Dird quickly ran off towards the ocean.

“Ugh, ohhhhhhhhhhh ～～～～!” Meanwhile, Shou, who had been caught watching his morning physiology, was just writhing around, trying to stifle his shame.

Shou washed his face with water from the spring and stretched out in the morning sun.

For breakfast that day, sashimi was served on a banana leaf, just like yesterday's lunch.

“Wow, Dird, you must really like sashimi.”

“Ehehe~, Shou likes it too, right?”

“Well, yeah. Besides, sashimi is very light, so it's good to eat in the morning, right?”

“Yeah, yeah. Moreover, ... Ta-da! This morning it comes with wasabi!”

“Oh!”

Dird took out a shark skin grater and a stick of wasabi, Shou was impressed. He hadn't expected to see wasabi on this island.

“Did you pick that on this island? I've heard that wasabi needs cold and clean water to grow.”

“Yeah, yeah! Look, over there on the mountainside where you can see the waterfall, right? That's the highest point on the island, and it's full of them!

“Wow, ..., did you pick them yourself?”

“Yes! When I was there before.”

“Haha, you're really active... ... And yes. Let's eat this, Dird.”

Dird's eyes widened in surprise as he took out the fruit he had stored last night.

“What? Where did you get this? Did Shou pick it himself?”

“No, actually, when Minamida-san came to visit yesterday, the Cabbits that Minamida-san keeps gave it to me.”

“What? D-chan and the others gave it to you? D-chan and the others only give things to people they like!”

“Is that so? I mean, D-chan is ... ... those Cabbits, was that their name?”

“Yes. They're called D-chan, F-chan, K-chan and M-chan. They're really smart! I tried to write “M” on her forehead with a magic marker, but she freaked out and hated me! And Palty gave me a hard time about it, saying, “You can't abuse animals!” She scolded me very harshly. Hahaha!”

“Well, of course she's going to scold you ... ... Especially M. She's doesn’t like being manipulated.”

While having such a peaceful conversation, he and Dird passed the time in the morning.

All the while, she remained the innocent Dird of yesterday, never once transforming into the mysterious Dird he had seen that night. So Shou decided to believe that it was all just a dream.
.....

“Hey Dird, speaking of which, where are Alea and the others this morning?”

“They're waiting for you at school. I'm in charge of picking up Shou today!”

“So, you're on duty at ... ..., the school?”

“Yes, that's right! But more importantly, Shou, here you go!”

“What? What is it?”

After breakfast, Shou was brushing his teeth with the travel toothbrush he had brought with him when Dird threw him a burlap sack. He hurriedly took it and looked at the contents, which included a set of school uniforms - a blazer, pants, and shirt.

“Oh. Are these for me?”

“Yeah, I got it from Miron-sensei. We're all set now! From today, Shou will be our classmate too. ♪”

“What? Oh... I forgot that school starts today! I forgot all about it!

“What? You forgot? Hahaha! You're such an idiot, Shou~!”

“Yesterday was so crazy, I forgot about school... ...”

She was also holding a bag in her hand.

“Oh, is that Dird's uniform?”

“Yes, it is. Then I'm going to change too, so let me borrow your tent for a bit~”

“What? You're changing here?”

“Yes. It's too much trouble to go back to the house. That's why I brought it. Ehehe.”

“Then why didn't you just wear it at home?”

“What? Because I was going to do the harpooning first thing in the morning, and I thought my uniform might get dirty.”

“Ah, I see... ...” Because of that, they were able to eat delicious sashimi, so there was nothing more Shou could say.

“Well then, I'll borrow it first~”

Saying that, Dird entered Shou's tent and closed the entrance.

“Oh, what should I do, I forgot my panties.”

“!?”

“Well, that's okay, I don't have to wear them... ♪”

(No, no, no, no, no, no! What are you thinking?) Shou almost complained but kept it to himself. If he were to say to her face, “Of course you have to wear pants,” she might treat him as a pervert. On the other hand, if you say, “It's okay if you don't wear pants (refreshing),” you'll also be considered a pervert. As Shou was having a brainstorming session, the tent opened and Dird jumped out.

“Shou~ I'm back!”

Wow.”

She was wearing a really neat looking sailor suit. The sight of Dird, who originally had a beautiful and delicate face, wrapped up in a uniform like this made her look like she could pass as a young lady from a good place if only she kept her mouth shut. You can't see the wild child that she usually is.

(And yet, ... now, under that skirt, ... gulp) Shou swallowed his breath at the strange thought, feeling a little daunted.

“What? What's wrong Shou~? Is there something wrong with my uniform?”

“What? Oh, it's nothing like that. It looks good on you!”

“Really? Ehehe thanks... Then Shou should get ready as soon as possible!”

“Ah, um, yeah.” After brushing his teeth, Shou quickly changed into his uniform and left for school with Dird.

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So, the two of them went in the opposite direction from where they had walked yesterday. They walked through the wilderness on their way to school, crossing fields and mountains. It was a very strenuous walk to school.

“Wow, this is an amazing island ... ... The bike Minamida gave me, it's going to be hard to use for school ... ...”

Eventually, they reached an overlook with a lightly paved path.

“Oh, look, there it is, Shou!” Dird pointed across the road - to the top of the hill.

At the top of the hill sat three huge trees that seemed to have been planted to shelter them from the wind, and in front of them was an old wooden school building. At first glance, it looked like an abandoned school used in TV dramas, with its aged and historical appearance.

Just then, a strong gust of wind blew, causing Dird's skirt to billow out, revealing her adorably shaped hips...

“Boo!”

Shou blurted out, and Dird complained, "It's so windy here!" and glanced at Shou.

“Oh, ..., Shou, did you, did you see that?”

“Huh? Oh, no, no, no, I mean, no! I'm sorry, I didn't mean to!”

“Ugh, ..., but we're even! You see, I was just on Shou's ... ...”

“Ugh, ...”

Shou's face heated up, and Dird's cheeks turned red as well. In the midst of the delicate atmosphere, both of them could not help but laugh at each other's embarrassment.

As they continued, a voice greeted them as they approached the school.

“Oh, thank you for coming.”

The owner of the voice that greeted them so gently was .....Alea and the others.

“Yeah! It was fun~!”

“It was fun. ..... What are you doing there?”

Alea glared at Dird, who ran up to her with her hands raised, and Apuesta and Palty couldn't hide their giggles.

In the midst of all this, Shou's body stiffened reflexively when he saw Alea's face.

In his dream last night, Alea was the one who blew off Dird's right arm with a mysterious ray of light.

But that little bit of fear quickly faded, as Alea was smiling as she frolicked with Dird, and she didn't look like a bad girl at all.

“Alright Shou, let's get this on before we go into school.”

“Huh? Pa, Palty?”

Palty approached him with a smile and a tie in her hand.

“Oh, I didn't know there was a necktie.”

“Huh... I wasn't sure if Shou could tie a tie by himself, so I brought you one. I was actually trying to get Dird to remember... ...”

“With this goofball, it doesn't matter how many times you try, you'll always end up with a hard knot in the end.”

“Boo. It's just too hard!”

They all started laughing at Dird's smiling face. Palty put her hands around Shou's neck from the front and tied his tie. The sudden close proximity and the good scent of shampoo from her hair made Shou feel light-headed and fidgety. Palty chuckled at the sight of Shou.

“Yes, that's fine. I'll teach you later.” Slapping Shou lightly on the chest, Palty smiled.

“Uh-huh. Thanks, Palty.”

“You're welcome. Shou, I'll show you to the principal's office first.”

“Oh, yes. Please do.”

Shou and the others walked out, with Palty leading the way.

“Oh, by the way, Dird, did you feed Shou properly?” Apuesta questioned, and Alea connected the words with a smirk.

“You know Dird, I bet you served him sashimi this morning, didn't you?”

“Boo! Fine! Shou loves sashimi, and I made sure to add wasabi this morning! Right? Shou?”

“Yes. It was delicious. Thanks, Dird.”

“See! Shou was happy to see me, you know? Even in the morning, I woke him up ... ...”

Shou could tell by the redness of Dird's face, but Alea and the others seemed to be wondering why Dird had suddenly gone crazy.

“Well, I caught the fish, and after we ate, I gave him his school uniform, and we both got dressed, and I showed him the shortcut to school, and we walked to school like this! Right? Shou?”

“Uh, yeah... ...”

This time, Shou's face turned red because he had seen inside Dird's skirt on the way to school, and Shou's gaze flicked to Dird's skirt. It was only when Shou's gaze flicked to Dird's skirt, and Dird's cheeks flushed red from Shou's gaze, that Alea and the others finally noticed.

“Hey ... ... Dird, you can't be serious!”

Alea moved first. Without any hesitation, she put her hand on Dird's skirt and looked inside. Shou averted his gaze in panic.

“I knew it! Hey Apuesta, Palty, this girl's not wearing panties again!”

“What?”

“Oh my god!”

“No, no, I didn't do it on purpose! I was in a bathing suit, and I forgot!”

“You can't say you forgot, you idiot! I should have gone to wake Shou up if I had to do this. What an idiot.”

“Mmm! Don't be silly, Alea's a big jerk!”

“I don't need to be treated like an idiot by an idiot!”

“Aaah!”

Dird got teary-eyed after Alea smacked her on the head, and Alea crossed her arms with a snort.

“Oh, by the way, Dird, didn't you leave some spare panties at school for just such an occasion? Why don't you go put them on now?”

“Oh, I see! Shou, come with me! I'll lend you my panties and we'll wear matching ones.”

“You're not even close to being an idiot, Dird!”

“Wow, Alea, why are you mad at me?”

“... ... Shou, let's go.”

“Oh my god, you're totally ... ... right. Let's leave the two of them alone, Shou.”

“Yes, yes ... ...”

Shou was taken to the school building by Apuesta and Palty, who looked dumbfounded.

Starting today, this will be Shou's new school.

Episode 2: A New Life in Paradise

“Sensei, we have Kukoma-kun with us.”

Shou and the others stopped in front of a room, where Palty knocked and announced. Knowing that the homeroom teacher was inside, Shou waited nervously for her to appear.

“Yes. Come in. It's open.”

(.....? That voice, somewhere ... ...)

Before Shou could wonder, Palty slid the door open.

The scenery spread out in front of Shou and the others; At first glance, it looked like an infirmary, but there was a large amount of material spread out on the desks for faculty members, and various files were also packed on the shelves. It seemed that they were using the infirmary as a staff room.

“Hi. G'mornin', Shou-kun♪”

“Ah! I knew it! Miron-sensei!”

“Oh my. You remembered my name? I'm so happy!”

Miron, who was sitting on a chair, quickly got up and ran over and hugged him. And then Miron let go of his body and suddenly said. “Oh, yes, Shou-kun. I've been wondering since last night, which one is your favorite?”

“Eh?”

Shou's body stiffened, and Miron pointed at the desk with a very serious face. When Shou turned around, what he saw was...

“!”

Shou turned around in a panic, and Dird and the others behind him shouted in surprise.

Perhaps sensing this, Dird, Alea and Apuesta moved forward with a sigh. Palty responded with a furrowed brow.

“Sensei ... are you still struggling with this ... thing?”

“What do you mean by this, Palty, choosing underwear is a woman's battle - a war, you know? It's no exaggeration to say that the piece of lingerie you choose in the morning can make or break your day! If you are a lady, you should be aware of this. In any case, you're wearing boring white pants today, aren't you?”

“Miron-sensei, ..., that's sexual harassment!”

Yes. Laid out on the desk were a variety of colorful undergarments, from white to pink, and even a pitch-black pair. All of them belonged to Miron, and Shou couldn't even look at them properly.

“Huh~. All of Sensei's underwear has tiny cloth parts and is kind of unreliable~. Biyon-biyon.”

“Don't stretch them! That's why you're a little girl... ... So, Shou-kun! What do you think? What do you think? Which underwear do you think will bring out the best in me?”

“Why are you asking me that?”

“Hey! Look people in the eye when you talk to them! Isn't that what they teach you?

“Ugh, ugh. Wow, I understand... ...” Shou slowly and stiffly turned his head towards the front of the room as Miron's mysterious power closed in on him.

At that moment, a number of panties were thrust in front of Shou's eyes. “Whoa!”

“Shou-kun, look at me carefully. This is your chance to stare at your homeroom teacher's beautiful underwear as if you were licking them. If you're a man, rejoice!”

“Heee, don't say that!”

“Sensei, that kind of behavior is somewhat problematic for a beautiful female homeroom teacher... ...”

“Hmph, shut up you little white pants Palty!”

“No, please don't.” Palty blushed.

These were not the words of a beautiful homeroom teacher, no matter how he heard them, but Miron's eyes were still serious, and she wasn't joking. Shou couldn't help but be horrified. He thought to himself, “This teacher is not serious after all.”

“Jeez~ Sensei, calm down!”

“Damn. You've been like this since this morning, Miron.”

Dird grabbed Miron's arm and pulled her away, while Alea gave her a cold look, and Apuesta and Palty both breathed a resigned sigh.

“Miron's been chasing Minamida around, you know. Why are you asking Shou about that? Did you change your target to Shou?”

Miron, apparently regaining her composure at Alea's comment, huffed and stepped back.

“Yeah, that's the thing. I still want to have an affair with Minamida! But he's tougher than he looks, so I wanted to ask Shou-kun, who's also a guy, for his opinion!”

“Adultery? You can't just say that out loud! You're a teacher, after all!” Shou couldn't hide his surprise and confusion at Miron's fearlessness.

“Hahahaha, no problem. Shou, next time you see Minamida, could you ask him what he likes in panties? Listen to me! I'll give you a reward!”

“What? No, I don't want to do that! It's impossible! It's impossible!”

“You're a man, so don't be ashamed! That's right, if it works out, I'll write all kinds of things about you on the application form! But if you fail, you'll have to stay in school.”

“Eeeeeeeeh!

“Sensei!”

As expected, Dird and the others all laughed at that. But Miron didn't stop...

“Oh, no. You're right, you can't say which one is better until you've actually seen me wear it. Come on, Shou-kun.” Miron started to take off her lab coat, and with her hands on her skirt, her lower half was about to be exposed.

Bam! There was a loud noise, and Dird shouted, “Yikes!” Then Palty blurted out.

“Sensei... ..., please take a look at Shou.”

“What?” Miron questioned at Palty's words. Then she finally checked on Shou, who was passed out with the whites of his eyes showing.

“... ... Shit! I guess that means you kids are still in their kid panties. Oh, yes, Dird, I've already accumulated a number of your panties on the top shelf of that wardrobe, can you please take them home? They're in the way.”

“Oh, yeah, I forgot my panties! Thanks, Sensei!”

“Oh dear. What are you going to do about, Shou?”

“... ... huh.”

“We'll just have to let him sleep. Huh, why does it have to be like this: ... ...”

Alea was disappointed and Apuesta just sighed. Palty put her hand on her cheek and made an annoyed expression. The three of them carried Shou to bed and lamented his situation.

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“Good morning, everyone! This is the chicken who got excited by the teacher's sensual scene and blacked out when he moved to a new school for this reason and that reason... This is Kukoma Shou-kun. You should greet him with a smile!”

“Hey Sensei, what's with the introduction?” Shou, who should have arrived at the class with his heart pounding from nervousness, couldn't help but crack up at Miron's first words.

When he looked around the class, he saw about 20 students of different races and ages. Fortunately, they were watching Shou with warm eyes. Shou was a little touched. Apparently Shou has already realized that he was being played by Miron. Of course, Dird and the others were applauding.

Just like the appearance of the school building, the classrooms also had an old-fashioned feel to them. Shou turned to the others and said with a smile. “Hello, nice to meet you! I'm Kukoma Shou from the mainland! It's nice to meet you!” He bowed his head, then raised it again and was greeted with a warm round of applause.

“Shou-kun, your seat is over there in the back. It's too much trouble to suddenly change seats, so I just added a desk for you, please be patient.”

“Ha, yes.”

Shou walked to the seat Miron had pointed to, Dird waved at him, Apuesta raised a small hand, looking a little embarrassed, and Palty smiled at him.

And sitting next to Shou was Alea. ”Yo”. Shou gave a short greeting to Alea, who said, “Hi.”

“That's the end of homeroom! Alea, since you're next to Shou, you should teach him how to use his notebook. See you later.”

Alea sighed lightly and said, “Okay.”

“No, it's okay Alea, everyone knows how to use a notebook.”

“Huh? It's probably not the 'notebook' you know, but is that okay?”

“Huh?”

Shou didn't know what to say. Alea smirked and continued.

“Look. You see that plate in my desk?”

“A plate ... ... Oh, this?”

It was tucked into the back of the top panel, and when Shou slid it forward, there was a click and a bright red, B4-sized (9.8 x 13.9 inches, book sized) plate popped out. It looked like a thin notebook computer.

“Wow. This is a 'notebook'? Is it a machine? It looks like a computer.”

“Yes. The black oval thing in the corner is the sensor for authentication. Put your right thumb on it.”

“Authentication?”

“They're on things for personal use. You know how they took your fingerprints when you transferred to this school? That's what they're using for this.”

“Oh, right...”

Shou remembered, and as Alea said, he put his thumb on it, and the plate opened with a beep. At the top, the data for each textbook was clearly displayed, and at the bottom, the LCD of the tablet was visible.

“You can take it home and use it to study from today. It's powered by a built-in battery ... ..., so if you use it just for studying normally, it'll manage to last about a week. As long as you charge it properly at school, you can use it at home for things other than studying, too.”

“Wow, that's amazing. I thought I was done with civilized devices when I came to this island, but I found a great one in an unexpected place. I wonder which manufacturer this is?”

“Haha. It's got a memory slot on the side, so you can watch as much video material as you want from the branch library. Unfortunately, there's no manga or anime on it, though. There are some interesting documentaries on rare plants, animals, and various landscapes, and I highly recommend them.”

“I see. ... ... You know a lot about this kind of stuff, Alea. I'd like to see it next time.”

“Look at that. It's also useful for survival, you can tell what's edible and what's not, and you can look up how to make simple tools. I mean, I learned almost everything from it.”

“Oh, that sounds really useful!”

While he was chatting with Alea, the short recess ended and Miron came back to the classroom to start the class.

“Hey! Keep your private conversations to a minimum. Sensei’s brilliant and beautiful class is about to begin!”

Miron pressed a button in the corner of the classroom. Then something that looked like an electronic blackboard came down from the ceiling. It was another amazing system that Shou had never seen on the mainland, and he was honestly amazed, “Oh .....”

“Oh, I see. I guess they don't use the regular blackboards there. The school building is old and

tattered, but the classes are a bit modern. It's kind of amazingly fresh.”

“!!”

Shou's casual murmur caused the entire class to turn back to Shou in quick reaction.

“Whoa! What? What? Did I say something weird ... ...?”

Everyone, including Dird, Alea and the others, reacted so excessively that Shou was so scared that he thought his heart would stop. However, they didn't say anything, but it seemed to Shou that each of their bodies were trembling slightly. It was as if they were afraid of what Shou might say. .....

“Look! Everyone focus over here! We're not going to use the blackboard, don't worry!”

At the sound of Miron's voice, all of his classmates looked forward as if nothing had happened. It seemed to Shou that they were all relieved. But he couldn't quite figure out why.

“... ... what was that? Hey, Alea?”

“Oh, oh. It's nothing. Come on, class is about to start.”

“Uh-huh.”

She replied matter-of-factly, but Shou felt that Alea's face had suddenly gone pale.

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“Hello, Kukoma-kun. Nice to meet you.”

“Huh? Ah...”

At the end of first period class, a blond-haired boy appeared in front of Shou's desk. Behind him, there was another boy with brown hair.

“I'm Mike, Mike Crown. Sorry I'm late to introduce myself. Nice to meet you.”

“What, ...? Uh-huh. Nice to meet you too!”

“Yes. So, this is Ichiro, he has a Japanese name and speaks Japanese, but he's from Europe by blood.”

“Nice to meet you.”

Surprised by their fluent Japanese, Shou stood up nervously, shook Mike's hand, and then shook Ichiro's hand.

“Well, I'd like to introduce you to the rest of the class. Are you fluent in English, Kukoma-kun?”

“No, not at all.”

“Hahahaha. Well, then, I'll introduce you.”

Mike's fresh smile broke Shou's tension to some extent, and Shou instinctively knew that Mike was a good guy.

“As you can see, you're the only Japanese in this class. We can speak Japanese, but half of the class can only speak - or listen to - one language. So, if you want to talk to them, just go through me, Ichiro, Dird and the others. If you need anything, feel free to ask.”

“Hey Mike, don't make me a translator too.”

“That's nice Alea, but didn't you make a translator before? Doesn't that work?”

“Shut up, it's broken, I'm sorry! I let Dird use it and it broke, sorry!”

“Hahaha! You're still the same Alea, I feel for you.”

“Gosh ... ..., this guy is kind of annoying ... ...”

As Alea turned away, Mike smiled at Shou and said, “So I'll introduce you to my classmates.”

“Thanks for going to the trouble of ... ..., Mike.”

“You can call me Mike, and Ichiro is fine with Ichiro, right?”

“Yeah,” nodded Ichiro, who seemed to be a bit quiet, but had a decent personality.

“Oh, um, yeah. I'll go with Shou then.”

“Okay, Shou. Then I'll introduce you to the person in front of the window over there. She's...”

Mike's introduction of his classmates went on peacefully throughout, and each student who was introduced by Mike briefly greeted and reacted to Shou, and everyone's introduction was successfully completed.

“Well, it's going to be hard to remember everyone at once. You'll find the seating order and each person's profile on that terminal, so you can refer to it.”

“Yeah, thanks Mike, Ichiro, that was really helpful.”

“Haha, no problem. I'm going to start second period now. I'll see you later, Shou.”

“Yeah!”

“Damn it. Get your ass back here, Mike.”

Alea mumbled, and Mike just smiled back, “Hahaha.”

This was the end of the break, after having met all his classmates to some extent.

Thanks to Mike, the first day of school had been a good one, Shou thought happily as he went to his second period class.

Time went on without a hitch until fourth period.

The lunch break began, and as soon as the bell rang, many of the students ran out of the classroom at once, including Miron. ”I'm late!” Shou watched with a puzzled look on his face.

“Shou~! Let's have dinner together if you want~! Let's eat a lot of food!”

“Oh, Dird.” The energetic Dird came to Shou's rescue. She looked extremely bored during class but regained her energy during recess. She was easy to understand.

Apuesta and Palty came next, and the usual four of them soon gathered around Shou's desk.

Then Alea said. “Well, Shou probably doesn't know much about the lunch system yet, so let's all go together.”

“Yeah ... ..., that place is open today, so let's go there.”

“Oh, that's right. Let's all go there together.”

“Yeah, yeah! It's the hottest place in town!”

“What? Oh, there?”

“We'll find out when we get there! Let's go, Shou!

“Uh-huh!” Shou was taken to the hallway, where he asked. “Um, where are we going? Is there a cafeteria or something?”

Palty replied smiling to Shou's question.

“Well, this school serves lunchbox-style ... ..., or bento-type lunches. We're going to pick that up now.”

“Heh, ... I see. School lunch, huh?”

And so, they took him to a mobile store that had been set up in front of the main entrance.

There were many students crowded in the parked vans, and there were various lunch boxes available. Shou understood that they were all quickly running out of the classroom for this.

When it was Shou and his friends' turn, Shou noticed that the vendor was a familiar face.

“Hey, Tomi-san.”

“Oh, Shou-chan. Hoho, you seem to have gotten to know everyone pretty well already.”

“Yeah! Shou and I are already good friends, Grandma!”

“Dird-chan is always so energetic, as are Alea-chan, Apuesta-chan, and Palty-chan. You should take something nutritious with you.”

“Yes, yes, yes.” “Thank you, Tomi.”

After greeting each other, the four of them each received a separate lunch box from Tomi, who told them that they could usually choose whatever they wanted, but since food culture often differed from country to country, they could ask her in advance to prepare a lunch box for each of them.

“Okay, so this is for Shou-chan. Is tea okay to drink?”

“Oh, are there any other drinks?”

“Yes, there are. If you win the rock-paper-scissors game against me, I'll give you a bottle of whatever you want.”

“What? Are you sure?”

“Hohoho. But if you lose, you'll have to buy one of the paid drinks, okay? Besides, I'm pretty good at rock-paper-scissors, you know?”

Tomi flexed her hands, at which point Dird and the others interrupted her.

“Shou, you shouldn't do that!”

“That's right, Shou, I won't say anything bad, but you really shouldn't. You'll make a good sucker.”

“Shou, Tomi-san is very strong ... ...”

“She's right, Shou, Tomi is unusually strong at rock-paper-scissors. Unusually so!”

“Heh, ...” Hearing this story, Shou was suddenly very interested. It was because he had heard the story somewhere. “... ... I understand. I'll do it!”

“Eh?” “Seriously?” “! Shou, are you sure?”

“Hohohoho! You have good eyes, Shou-chan!” Tomi grinned and her eyes were that of a businesswoman. At the same time, the students around her were buzzing.

“—Ah, someone’s been caught again: ... …”

“—Tomi as a grandmother is usually kind, but when it comes to business, she's a demon.”

“—Ah. For some reason, I'm usually not so lucky, but when it comes to business, I get unusually lucky. I've never seen anyone beat Tomi before, have you?”

“—She's even been nicknamed the 'rock-paper-scissors queen'. There's even a rumor that she might be playing after the fact.”

“—Hey! Didn't anyone tell the new student about this?”

“—No, because I don't speak Japanese, and Mike didn't tell me!”

The students were making a lot of noise in a language that Shou couldn't understand, and for some reason, they were all looking at Shou with concern.

It didn't take long for the attention to fall solely on Shou and Tomi, and before they knew it, a large crowd of people were staring around them.

“Uuuuu! Shou~! If you do this, do your best~!”

“If we're going to do this, then we're going to have to do it, Shou, just win!”

“Shou... ..., good luck.”

“Fight on, Shou!”

With Dird and the others cheering, the game finally began.

“Hohoho. Ready to go, Shou-chan? Are you ready?”

“Yes!”

“Hoho, nice eyes. I like it! Let's go! Jan, Ken...”

After finishing that one match.

Shou was cheered on by the crowd and won a paper carton of lemon tea, becoming the first man to defeat the “Queen”, a legend that would be passed down throughout the school for the rest of his life.

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“Amazing ~Shou, you beat that Grandma Tomi!”

“You really scared me, Shou, what kind of person are you? I've never seen anyone beat Tomi-san before.”

“A lot of students have been forced to buy juice for a long time now, but ... ...”

“That's great, Shou, you're the school's hero from today on.”

“No, don't do that. It's just a coincidence, just a coincidence.”

But Shou was grinning inwardly with happiness. To be honest, the fact that he was a strong rock-paper-scissors player hadn't made Shou very happy in the past. But now, he was simply happy. He was happy to have something to be proud of, even if it was just luck.

Shou and his friends were talking at a rest area set up at the edge of the schoolyard, where they had come after receiving lunch and drinks from Tomi.

There was a huge stone table with a roof over it, and it was nice and sheltered from the sun and the wind. Because the school itself was located on a small hill, there was a great view of the entire island and even the horizon. Shou was so impressed that he shouted, “Wow!”

“Do you like it? Actually, Shou, this is a place that everyone always fights over! But today, it's special!”

“Special? Why?”

“Because you're here, Shou.”

“What, ...?”

Palty was smiling, and Dird, Alea and Apuesta were also smiling happily.

Shou noticed. Shou was so moved that he almost cried.

“No, but I'm hungry. Let's eat quickly! It's been a long time since we've eaten here.”

“Yes, it has.” “Oh, I remember.” “Hmm. Hmm... That's right.”

They all took their seats at the small stone table.

Then they opened their lunch boxes and found that Shou's was a Japanese meal of white rice with fried whitefish as the main course. On the other hand, Dird and the others were sandwiches and fruit, vegetarian food with vegetables as the main ingredient, and western food such as hamburgers.

“Hmm? What's that? Shou, do you want my hamburger?”

“Oh, no, not really. They all had different contents.”

“Haha, Shou, if you want one of my hamburgers, just tell Tomi in advance and you'll be fine.”

“Oh, I see... I see.”

After that, everyone was chatting and eating together. The time passed happily.

Eventually, when he was almost done eating, Shou mumbled as he took in the amazing view.

“... ... No. But I guess I'm really going to be living on this island. ... ...”

That must have been what Dird and the others heard. The girls smiled and said, “Ehehe. Let's have fun playing every day from now on!”

“It's a strange island, though. Let's just take it easy.”

“If you need anything, just let us know.”

“Shou, you're one of us now. Let's learn a lot of things together in the future.”

“Everyone: ... ...”

The kind words from Dird and the others made the anxious feelings swirling inside Shou disappear. Living alone for the first time (and in a tent) was full of worries, but Shou subconsciously felt that meeting these girls in this kind of life would be an important asset.

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“Kukoma Shou-kun, huh? I didn't expect you to get along so well with Dird and the others so quickly.”

It was lunchtime, and Shou was eating with Dird and the girls, as several people watched from a distance from behind the building.

“Hey, I know you're curious about that girl, but don't get too close, okay? Curiosity kills cats, as Miron-sensei once taught us in class.”

“Yeah, yeah. We don't even know what's going to happen to him yet, so we have to be careful not to act in a way that could give him the wrong idea.”

“You're right. Besides, we have a separate watch, right?”

A number of figures gathered in the darkness. They murmured to each other.

The person in the center of the crowd shrugged and said, “Oh dear. He's come all this way to be our classmate. Why can't we just be friends? Besides, I'm the kind of person who doesn't like to bring my work ethic into my personal life, you know.”

The rest of the class looked at the boy with a look of dismay on their faces. But they didn't seem to blame the boy any further.

“So? How do you feel about your contact with him?”

“Hmm. He's humble and kind, just like a Japanese man. I think he'll be a good match for me. Oh, I mean in a private way, of course. Well, I'm sure he's much more decent than Miron-sensei, who is also from Earth.”

“That's for sure.”

They all started laughing at once. There was a bright and joyful atmosphere there.

Then one of them said with a serious look on his face.

“Now, ... who will he be taken in by, or won't he? That remains to be seen, but we'll have to watch him carefully.”

“Right. If he decides to join, he'll have his own staff, and that could upset the current balance.”

“Or there's always the possibility of ... ... as the fifth person.”

The boy at the center of the group mumbled, and the rest of the group suddenly started to buzz.

“If all of us here were to attack, we would definitely be no match for any of Dird's forces. I think that, given the history of ... ..., it would not be a bad situation for him to become the fifth person, although this is just my personal opinion. Maybe there will be a great revolution, you know?”

“.....” The surrounding members all fell silent. Apparently, they were pondering his words.

While many of the boys and girls couldn't hide their confusion, the boy in the center of the room laughed and said, “Well, I don't know what the higher-ups think, but aside from the 'game', we've all met each other here. Let's have more fun together. The key to enjoying life is to be honest with yourself. Youth is short, you know.”

The members around him could not help but smile at the boy's refreshing smile.

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After school that day.

“Hey you guys! We're having a welcome party for Shou-kun today!”

At Shou's house - by the seaside tent, there were barbecue grills, a simple stove, and various other survival goods. Everything seemed to have been arranged by Miron.

“Se, Sensei? What's this?”

“Hey, hey, Miron, what are you starting?”

“A ... ... barbecue party?”

“Well, it looks like it.”

Shou and his friends came back from school, and Shou was thinking of asking Dird to teach him how to harpoon, when Miron came in with a big package.

“That's right, a BBQ! Come on, you guys, help me set it up!”

“What do you mean prepare? ... ... I don't see any meat or vegetables, let alone a fire.”

“That's right, Sensei. Are we going hunting now~?”

Miron responded to Alea and Dird's question by waving her finger in the air, “Tsk tsk. Do you think I haven't prepared anything? Wait a minute. Tou!”

And then, just as it seemed like she was running off, she jumped into the sea.

“Whoa! Miron-sensei!”

Shou was astonished, but Miron did an amazing crawl and quickly got into a nearby cruiser that was floating in the ocean.

“Is that Sensei .....'s ship?”

“Looks like it. I wonder when she parked it in a place like that.” Apuesta and Palty said, and Shou was even more surprised; he hadn't expected Miron to have her own cruiser. It was a gorgeous looking ship that looked like it could do some serious ocean sailing. It was hard to even think about how much money was at stake.

“Well, it looks like it might have a small rubber boat or something for transportation.”

“I think there is ... ..., but the teacher is impatient.”

“Hmm. Yes, Apuesta, and it would be impossible for a cruiser of that size to dock at the beach.”

Eventually, Miron emerged from the cruiser, carrying a large cooler box on her shoulder. She dove back into the ocean and swam back to the beach with a powerful stroke that would have

made a mermaid sit up and take notice.

Alea and the others looked dumbfounded, but only Dird was crying out, “Sensei, hurry up!”

“Whew, you made us wait!”

“You're so tough, ...”

Miron came out of the water, soaking wet, and in front of Shou, who was mumbling, Miron put down the cooler box, which could fit one person, and opened it.

“Now, let's see what you've got!”

Miron crossed her arms proudly, and Shou and the others peeked fearfully into the contents.

“..... Oh!!!”

Everyone shouted in unison.

The cooler box was filled with marbled beef, plump chicken, fresh vegetables, mushrooms, and even wine and sake.

“Sensei, did you swim with this? How powerful are you?”

“Hmph! Come on, let's celebrate Shou-kun's arrival on the island! We're having a yakiniku party! We're having a barbecue! Get ready to party!”

“Aye aye sir!” Dird and the others saluted, posturing. Alea, who had been complaining a while ago, was now working as well.

Thus, Shou's welcome party was hastily organized.

The prep work was done, and the meat and vegetables made sizzling, appetizing noises on the huge iron-reinforced stone plate Miron had brought with her, giving off a seductive smell.

“Huh. So once again, Shou-kun, welcome to Banjō Island!”

“Welcome!”

“Oh, thank you!”

Miron raised a mug of alcohol, and Shou and the girls responded with cups of juice and tea. Miron quickly took a swig of her drink and let out a pleasant “Puhhh!”

“Oh, it's not fair that only Sensei drinks!”

“Hm? You've got some nerve talking to a teacher like that, Dird, but I'm sorry! Minors aren't allowed to drink!”

“You're not acting like a teacher at all, though.”

“There! What did I say? If you've got a problem with that, then you're going to have to stop eating all this meat...”

“I didn't say anything, sergeant.

“Good, Private Alea.

The temptation of the meat was too much for Alea, and she had been completely tamed. She even said, “For the sake of meat, I'll accept being a private. Apuesta and Palty were giggling at that.

Then, a cute voice said, “Miah.

“Oh. You guys are Minamida's .....”

The Cabbits ran up to Shou, who noticed them first, and Dird and the others said, “Oh! The Cabbits!” The girls were happy to see them.

Then Miron's eyes lit up.

“Oh, you guys are in the right place. There's something I want you to see... ... Here it is!”

“What?”

What the hell is this? Before Shou's eyes, Miron pulled out a colorful pair of underwear from the depths of the cooler box. It was the one she had shown him in the infirmary this morning.

“Whoa! Teacher! Where are you getting that stuff from!”

“Mr. DT shutup! So, you guys, which of these underwear do you think Minamida would like the most? Tell me and I'll give you a good one!”

“.....”

The Cabbits stared at several pairs of underwear in silence for a while, and then all four of them pointed to one pair of underwear at once with their dexterous ears.

“Mya!”

“This? I see. If you want to wear pure white underwear with no ornaments, ... Minamida is surprisingly pure and normal. I'll give you one of each of my favorite underwear as a thank you for your valuable information. Here, take it away, Cabbit! And eat some meat, too! Come on,

come on!”

“Meow!”

The four animals dexterously rolled up their separate underwear and wrapped them around their large ears, and happily mewed “Myaa~!” as they crunched on the high-grade marbled meat that Miron had picked up with her chopsticks.

“Guys, ..., please don't get bribed out of nowhere, ...”

“Oh, Minamida-san!”

Then Minamida, who had been hiding behind a tree, came out with a tone of resignation. Minamida seemed to be uncomfortable with Miron, and Shou understood why he was hiding, but he had no idea what ... ... the Cabbits would do with the underwear.

“Hey, hey, guys. I'm sorry to bother you while you're having so much fun. But this is a request form for the school lunch menu. It doesn't have a lot of choices, but if you give it to the delivery lady tomorrow at lunch, it will be applied from a week from now. Well, I'd recommend Japanese food for Kukoma-kun.”

“Oh, yes. Thank you for going to the trouble.”

“No problem. And here's something for you. I've got to make my rounds, so I'll leave you to it!”

After handing Shou the form and the bag of goodies, Minamida turned to run away. It was obvious that he wanted to get out of here as soon as possible. However...

“Wait! Wait for me, Minamida!”

Miron tried to chase after him, but Minamida disappeared into the jungle with the Cabbits in an uncanny escape, making it impossible to chase after him.

“Shit! – Hmph, well, that's fine. I've learned what Minamida likes today... ... Huh. Tonight, I'm going to wear this underwear and crawl in bed with him! Huhuhuhuhuhu ......!”

Shou's face tightened at the sight of Miron's pink obsession, and Dird looked puzzled, “What's a night crawl?” Alea replied bluntly, “It's when you ask for a night fight.” Apuesta blushed, “I think you're right, I'm not... ... “You're right, I'm not.” Palty blushed and gave her a stern look, “You're out of control.”

Soon, the fun was over, and the sun had long since set.

“Uu～～～～n! That was soooo delicious~! Shou~!”

“Yeah, I guess so, Dird..... I haven't eaten meat like that since the entrance celebration in

middle school.”

Shou and the others ended up eating all of the food. They thought it would be difficult to dispose of the garbage and clean up the plates after dark, but thanks to the powerful light Miron had brought from her cruiser, they were able to do so without difficulty. The beautiful moonlight helped with that, too.

“Oh, this is no good. She's completely sound asleep again.”

Alea said as she came out of Shou's tent and shrugged her shoulders. Miron was asleep inside. She had eaten and drank so much that she had crawled into Shou's tent, drunk and gone off to dreamland.

“Hey, what a bold teacher ... ..., why is she in my tent ... ...?”

“Haha. Sensei falls asleep everywhere~!”

“I can't help it if this happens... ...”

“That's right. I didn't think it was possible, but ... ...Sensei, if she's drunk, she'll fall asleep anywhere, and that's a problem.”

Dird rolled over and laughed, Apuesta, who was washing the plates, sighed, and Palty looked annoyed, as if to say, “Oh, my God.”

“Well, um, ..., I mean, where am I going to sleep today?”

“Haha. Why don't you sleep with Sensei?”

“Hmm.”

Shou almost dropped the kitchen garbage at Dird's innocent comment.

“No, no matter how much, that's not right!”

“But I don't think Sensei cares about that~?”

“Haha, that's true.”

Alea agreed with a dry laugh, but this was a big deal to Shou.

(Even if the teacher doesn't care, ... I do!)

Shou wanted help, but Dird and the others just laughed at each other in a funny way.

“Miron-sensei is always sleeping like this ... all over the island.”

“Yes, Shou, but Sensei, she's a big girl. Most of the time, it's Minamida-san's job to retrieve her.”

“Is that so? Then call Minamida-san at ...”

“He'll only collect her if it's a bad idea to leave her... unattended. Besides, he's always reluctant, so I don't think he'll come even if I call ... ...”

“Oh, no ... ...”

Apuesta's words were harsh and desperate to Shou.

“It can't be helped, Shou; Minamida-san knows that it would be very troublesome if she wakes up in the middle of collecting ... ... It's like bomb disposal now.”

Palty casually said something awful, and Alea giggled, “That's very well said.”

“... ... Haha. So I guess I'll have to sleep outside today... ... Well, it's warm, so that's good.”

By the time Shou had decided to give up, Dird and the others had already finished cleaning up and were even getting ready to leave.

“Mmm~. I want to stay a bit longer, but sorry Shou, I have to leave soon~”

“Huh? Ladies, are you leaving already?”

“Yes. I'm sorry Shou, but good luck with the rest! I'll see you tomorrow!”

“Oh! Wait, wait! Don't leave me alone with the teacher!”

“I'm sorry, Shou, but you have to do your best.”

“I'm sorry, Shou.”

Dird and the girls mercilessly waved at Shou and went back to their respective houses, turning on their flashlights. Thus, Shou was left ... alone on the beach at night, or rather, the two of them were left alone...

“Damn ... ... what do you want me to do!” Muttering in resignation, Shou laid down on the spot and looked up at the sky.

Then Shou washed his body using the fresh water he had drawn from the spring beforehand and began to change beside the tent with the clothes he had dried during the day. At that moment...

“Oh, you look so refreshed, Shou-kun.”

“Whoa! Sensei! Shou, who was in the middle of changing his clothes, turned around and hurriedly finished changing his clothes.

“Oh, my clothes were wet and smelly from the meat smoke, so I borrowed one of Shou-kun's T-shirts from inside.”

“Well, that's fine, but .....”

Shou couldn't look directly at Miron, because his t-shirt was obviously not the right size for her body and it was too tight, revealing the shape of her ample breasts. She was also wearing only underwear. It was the one that the Cabbits had chosen. There was no way he could look at her properly.

“What! Please wear something underneath, too!”

“... ... It's a nice moon again today. The woman in me is getting excited.”

“You're not listening to me at all, this woman...! You're drinking again, Sensei!”

“Did you find out?” Miron came out of the tent, a whole bottle of wine in her hand.

Shou was dumbfounded, wondering how much of a drinker she was after drinking so much earlier.

“I've had enough... Anyway, Sensei, if you're awake, please go home. I'll send you home.”

“Hmm, that's too bad. When I woke up, I was sure Shou-kun would be riding on top of me. Oh, or is he going to be the wolf that sends me home?”

“Boo! What are you talking about? I'm not going to do that! You like Minamida-san, don't you? Then it's not right for you to want me to do that! I'm just an ordinary guy with nothing special about me...”

“That's true. After all, a man should be good looking, right?”

“Ugh. Soooo, you're a ... ... teacher who doesn't follow me even a little...”

“Accept the facts as facts. It will help you grow and progress as a person.”

“I don't know what to say. But Minamida-san is not so ... ...” After saying this, Shou hurriedly covered his mouth with his hand.

“Huh. So you're trying to say that Minamida isn't exactly handsome either. Well, you're right.”

“Huh?” Shou was naturally surprised, he had thought that Miron was all about Minamida, so he hadn't expected to hear such a statement from Miron. “Sensei, don't you like Minamida-san, ...?”

“Oh my. Did I ever say anything about that?”

“No... Speaking of which, ... But then, why are you doing all this...?”

“Well...” Miron apparently had no intention of leaving yet.

Shou was almost mesmerized by her fiery profile as she gazed toward the ocean, but then she huffed and turned her gaze away. And then, just as she moved her gaze to the star-filled sky...

“... ...Minamida has the one thing I want the most.”

“... ... huh?”

Miron mumbled. It was a serious word that was unthinkable from her until now, and it contained a certain sadness. Shou intuitively thought that this was the real Miron.

“That's the thing that you can't have, no matter how much you wish for it ... ... and no matter how much money you pile up, you can't have it, the thing called possibility ... ...”

“Possibility ...? That's ... ... wow!”

Shou was intrigued by Miron's story, but when he saw Miron lying on the beach, he couldn't help but bend down. From where he was standing, he could see Miron's chest through the T-shirt. You could see her breasts through her t-shirt... You could see her breasts through her t-shirt... ...

“... ...? Mmmmm!” Miron immediately noticed Shou's suspicious behavior. She grinned and twisted her mouth.

“Oh! So, Shou-kun, did you set up a different tent than the one over there? Huh, I guess Shou-Kun has fallen under my spell! It's okay, it's okay!”

“No, nothing's fine! Please don't dress like that, you're too defenseless!”

“It's not polite tonight! Come on! You can direct your lust at the teacher! Come on, come on!”

Shou could tell with a glance at her eyes that she wasn’t thinking straight. So Shou tried to run away, but...

“Wait! Wait! I'm not letting you go like Minamida!”

“Woah, help me! Why do you look so happy? ～～～～!”

Shou was hugged from behind and fell down, there was no way for Shou to escape when a woman as big as Miron was holding him down.

“Hey! It's okay, I'm not scared. Don't hide, show everything to this health teacher. It'll make you feel so much better to expose it all... ...!”

“No, no, no, ... no, no, no!”

“Oh, no. I'm not going to hurt you by saying you're pretty when I see you, okay?”

“So, you're still a teacher? ～～～～! I mean, sensei! You said you were going to crawl over to Minamida's today! Are you sure you don't want to go?

“Hiccup ... ... ffff. I'm screwed, I can't stop. I'll clear my head for now!”

“Heee! Oh no! Somebody help me!”

“Huh... ... No one's going to help you... ... Give up... ... Huh... ... Oh!” Miron spat out a typical villainous line, while at the same time fighting back a feeling of nausea.

Shou's body shook with a bad feeling.

“U... ... that's not good. I woke up and suddenly moved too hard... ...”

“What ... ... se, sensei ... ...? I can't believe it.... ... No, stop!” Shou tried to escape from the crisis, but he could not move Miron's body, and...

“Ugh ... ... ueeeeee!”

“Gyaaaaahhhh!!!?”

Under the beautiful starry sky, Miron felt refreshed!

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“Shou... ... Shou. Good morning. Wake up.” The next morning. It was Apuesta who was on duty to pick Shou up.

She called into the tent in a voice not loud enough to wake anyone, puzzled by the lack of response, and then gently opened the tent entrance against the morning sun.

“Shou, it's morning, get up...”

And what did Apuesta see?

“Hmm~? What is it? Oh Apuesta, is it morning already? Hmmm...”

“Hmmm ... ... teacher ... ...? What's the matter ... ...?”

The first to wake up was Miron, stretching and forcing on an ill-fitting t-shirt, while Shou woke up next to her, rubbing his eyes.

“... ... ah”

Shou and Apuesta looked at each other.

Apuesta suddenly flushed and said, “I'm sorry, I'm sorry ... ...! She closed the tent and ran off.

“Aah! Wait, wait, wait! You're mistaken! No, it's not!”

Apuesta stopped and looked back at Shou, who rushed out. Apuesta stopped moving and turned around, just as Miron said, “Oh dear,” with a sleepy look on her face.

“Don't worry, Apuesta, it's nothing like you imagined. Don't look like such a little animal and don't run away. Come here.”

“Yes, yes, what is it ... ...?”

“It's true, Apuesta!”

“.....” Perhaps sensing Shou's desperate emotion, Apuesta slowly came back to Shou and Miron. Then she bowed her head, looking somewhat apologetic.

Afterwards, he explained what happened last night - mainly that Miron was too drunk and got tangled up and eventually fell asleep in his arms and he couldn't escape - and Apuesta understood. Shou was relieved that he hadn't been misunderstood in some strange way, and he felt a little heavy-headed because he hadn't been getting enough sleep because of Miron.

“I thought it would be something like that: – Here, Shou, salted fish and miso soup.”

“Oh, yeah, thanks.”

Quickly changing his clothes, Shou tucked into the meal Apuesta had prepared for him.

“I got Palty to give me the recipe. But basically, her seasoning is light, so I've made it a little thicker to suit you this time... ...”

“Mm-hmm. It's a great accompaniment to rice!”

“Yeah ... ... good.”

“Thanks Apuesta, it's so good! I wish I could eat it every day!”

“Oh, thanks ... ...”

“Hmmm. But I like it thicker. My tongue isn't getting enough!”

“... ... Then you can have this too.” Apuesta, who had interrupted Miron's conversation, silently offered her some sauces and spices, which Miron took with a grimace.

“Yes, yes, Sorry. I'm sorry! I'm sorry for interrupting your fresh morning as newlyweds!”

“Blah! Newlyweds are .....!”

“.....!!!”

Shou couldn't help but blow out a few grains of rice when Miron said this deliberately while pouring some shoyu on him. Miron grinned as if to say, “You got me.” Apparently, it was payback for being harassed.

“And by the way, Shou, on a different note, ... are you free at lunchtime today or after school?”

“Huh? Um, yeah. I don't think I have anything special to do. I'm free at lunch, and I don't have anything to do when I get home, so I was just thinking about practicing some skin diving... ...”

“Yes ... ... Then why don't you get a little part-time job during your lunch break and after school? It would be better to have some money for emergencies... ...”

“... ... part-time job?”

“– Ah! I see, it's that day.”

Then Miron interrupted and Shou said, “What?” Shou questioned them both.

Apuesta nodded slightly, and Miron continued to speak.

“Yes, yes. Daily necessities and other things that need to be purchased through foreign countries are sent here once a month in bulk. So today is the wholesale day.”

“Oh, I see. I see.”

“So, Apuesta is a part of the purchasing route and works with the shopkeeper. But, you know, we're really short of men on this island.”

“That's right. So, can you help me? Shou... ...”

“Hmmm... ...” Shou looked worried, but he didn't have the courage to refuse Apuesta's anxious plea. There is no reason to refuse in the first place, and there is no better way than to have money. (That's right, ... something might suddenly come up for grabs, so let's give it a try. Shou nodded pleasantly. “—Yes, sure! Apuesta's taken care of a lot of things for me. I'll leave that much to you.”

“... ...! Thanks, Shou; I'll increase your part-time pay.”

“Shou-kun. You'll enjoy it! She's making a lot of money from this.”

“Then you should get a consolation prize from the doctor for the pain in your heart last night.”

“Damn you, little girl!”

Apuesta exchanged glances with Miron, who seemed to have a surprisingly belligerent side, and Shou couldn't help but feel pressured by the atmosphere.

“Hmm, okay, Shou-kun! Then I'll comfort you with my body as consolation money...”

“I see, thank you very much! Then I'll take this light as a consolation prize! It's a great way to feel safe at night.

“Shiiiit! Listen to what the teacher says until the end!”

“Shou, why don't you take some of these supplies as well, Miron-sensei is kind enough to give them to you.”

“What? Wait, wait! Apuesta, I never said anything about that.”

“Really? That's very helpful! Thank you, Sensei!

“.....! They're a cheeky combination of ... ...!” But Miron, perhaps distracted by Shou's rather genuinely happy expression, scowled lightly, sighed heavily once, and said resignedly, “All right. Fine, fine, fine. I don't care if that's all it takes to heal Shou-kun's heart. Take whatever you want. But you should be thanking your teacher!”

“Yes, sir! Thank you, Sensei!”

“Good for you, Shou.”

Having acquired a number of daily necessities in this way, Shou gradually became aware that he was beginning to enjoy his survival lifestyle.

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“Ha ha ha! That was a disaster, Shou!”

When Shou arrived at the classroom with Apuesta, Dird and her friends were waiting for him and asked him curiously, “What happened with Miron last night?” First, Alea laughed out loud at him.

“You're not a good sleeper, are you? I'm sorry you had a rough night, Shou!”

“Hey, Dird, you don't know what 'hard' means, do you? You're such a child.”

“Mmm? What do you mean?

“No, no, no, no. You don't know anything, and you'll grow up pure. That's what I want.”

“M-Gah! I feel like I'm being treated like a child!

That morning, Dird and Alea were still getting along well. Palty chuckled as she put her hand on her cheek and said, “It seems like we've all been through more or less the same thing with Miron-sensei, but it seems like ... ... Shou is having the hardest time.”

“Ah, ha ha ... ...” Shou could not help but laugh.

“Damn, I envy you, Shou! I can't even get Miron-sensei to take any notice of me. I'm so jealous! Dird and the others are all over you!”

“What? Ma, Mike? Good morning.”

“Why? You think you have a talent for titillating the maternal instinct? You think that's the power of the shota? Tell me the secret to being popular with girls!”

“No, I don't know anything about that! I mean, Mike, you're really worked up this morning!”

Mike's cheek was pressed against Shou's cheek. It was a very annoying skinship.

“Oh, Apuesta, isn't today the day of the event? Should we help out this time, too?” Alea said as if she had noticed something, and Mike backed away from Shou with a panicked look.

“That's right! Today is the day of the sale! How could I have forgotten? Apuesta! I wonder if it's in stock again?”

“It is ... ..., but I can't sell it to you.”

“Oh my gosh! It's about time! You could have forgiven me! I'm sure a merciful God would have forgiven me by now!”

“... ... God may forgive you, but I will not. You are banned.” Apuesta said coolly, and Mike dropped to his hands and knees on the floor, looking devastated.

“Arghhhhh! Oh my god ... ... God has given up on me ... ... I'm dead ... ... I'm so bad...! ...!”

“What, uh, what ... ... do you mean?”

Shou scratched his cheek and mumbled, Apuesta sighed and said, “Never mind Shou. If you want, you can help me with my part-time job. The remuneration will depend on the sales, but ... ... you’ll be there, so we'll have enough manpower with everyone.”

“Yeah! I've got some parts I need. I also want to buy some snacks, so I'll do it!”

“I'm good too. Let me help you.”

Dird, Alea, and Palty each gladly agreed to Apuesta's request, and Apuesta breathed a sigh of relief.

“You're all with me? Hey Apuesta, is that a pretty hard job?”

“Just selling stuff, for one.”

“Selling, huh? ... ... I guess you could call it being a cashier. But does it take this many people to do that?”

“Yeah. I guess we'll find out when we go live... ...”

“I see. Alright, I'll work hard too!”

This was Shou's first part-time job experience, and he was feeling strangely elated and a little nervous.

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“Shou! A233! A345!”

“Ha, yes! Eh, eh, eh, eh, A233 and A345 .....”

The gymnasium during the lunch break. The place was packed with people, more than Shou had expected.

A temporary store was set up on the stage. The students were lined up and the line continued through the entrance into the schoolyard. There were not only students, but also adults from the island. They were all examining the pictures of the products on the tall boards and checking the tags with the product numbers on the side of the pictures. The system allowed you to order items by their numbers. Incidentally, everyone had their own electronic card that they used to pay for their purchases. This was because the checkout process was significantly faster that way.

“Even so, there's ... ... some kind of noisy stuff in there. ... ... It's a great store, isn't it ... ...?” Shou mumbled to himself as he searched for items. Apparently, firearms, parts that would be used for firearms, and mysterious cannon-like tubes have been on sale since a while ago. The firearms were not air guns in terms of weight, and Shou was inwardly scared that they might be the real thing.

“Shou, next! C-103, C-255, C-261!”

“Huh? Oh, well, the previous one is still ... ...! Eh! C103 ... ...”

Wearing a part-time apron, Shou struggled to move his feet from one task to the next. His job was to take the orders that Apuesta read out, search through the shelves on the platform, and deliver them to her. But it was a tough job because of the number of products.

“Shou, no. It's not this one, but the one next to it. The packaging looks similar, so be careful.”

“Oh! I'm sorry!”

The power of the queue and the shouts of “Hurry up!” Dird and the other part-timers managed to cover for him, but it seemed to him that they were still short-staffed.

“Shou, hurry up with that order I just gave you!”

“Wow, I'm sorry, now!”

It's so hard to make money! Shou thought with all his heart, and continued to run around, thanking his father for his hard work as a regular employee.

“—Hmm? Come on, this thing isn't new, is it? That's expensive for what it is!”

Shou was finally getting used to the job. Some customers began to complain to Apuesta. Shou, who had never worked in the customer service industry before, was worried about Apuesta as he looked for products, but Apuesta, the receptionist, replied with interesting words.

“Yes. But this is a beautiful “hit” item. As long as the equipment standards on the other side don't change, it's not the kind of thing that would ever come to us. It is a valuable item.”

“Well, ... that may be true, but ... ... hmm. But it's still a bit expensive.”

“I'm sorry. I'm sorry, but this is an item that would cost three times as much if it were displayed in a store over there. In fact, if we don't sell it here, they want to buy it back at five times the price.”

“Oh, five times?”

“Yes. What do you want me to do? The customer behind you is waiting, so we don't have much time.”

Apuesta spoke in such a way that other customers could hear her, and of course, the customers behind her seemed to be intrigued by the product. The man in the tights, impatient to find out, scratched his head in annoyance, chuckled, and then smiled.

“I'm no match for you, Apuesta-chan. All right, I'll buy it for that price!”

“Thank you very much.”

The two shook hands. It was a business deal.

(Apuesta..... seems to be more lively than usual.) Shou continued to work, energized by Apuesta's brisk movements and the smiles of the customers who were happy to get what they wanted.

“Oh, thank God, ～～～～! I thought I was never going to get this!”

“—Hey, how did you get something like this?”

“Wow! Thank you Apuesta! I'll take good care of this!”

“Oh, Apuesta, could you please keep these in stock for me next time? I'm going to need a few more next month.”

The customers came and went, and Apuesta was polite but quick to respond to each of them. The products disappeared from the shelves in no time at all.

“Dird, this isn't right. Replace it quickly.”

“I don't understand anymore, ～～～～! I can't remember the number! Alea, help me!

“I'm sorry ... ..., but I'm at my wits end ... ...”

“Waaaah! Alea's collapsed!”

“Dird, take care of Alea! Shou and I will take over for the two of you!”

“Whoa! I'm in a tough situation right now! Hii, someone help me ～～～～!”

Dird cried out in panic, the weak Alea collapsed, Palty hurriedly followed up on her surroundings, Apuesta dealt with the customers with the same skill, and Shou just continued to work frantically. However, the number of customers didn't decrease at all. The place was a living hell of screaming and shouting... ...

When the last customer left, it was already a few minutes after afternoon classes had started.

“I'm beat ... ... and I can't move around for a while ... ... I can't move for a while... ...

Shou was sitting on a chair, drooping like mud. Palty seemed to be able to move, but her usual smile could not hide her exhaustion. Even Dird, the energetic girl, was lying on the floor, and Alea was lying on the verge of death, and she had not yet come back from the world of sleep. Apuesta was the only one who hadn't lost her edge.

“Good work, Shou, guys. It usually takes longer than that, and there were a lot of products today, so it could have taken until after school if we were not careful.”

“What? Really?”

“Yeah. But it's necessary for everyone on the island, so the school tolerates it.”

Apuesta giggled at Shou's reaction, and Tomi brought her a canteen of cold tea, which she also used to help guide and calm the guests.

“Good job everyone, Shou-chan, you did a pretty good job. I was worried at first, but you did a great job. I'm impressed.”

“Oh, really? Thank you, Tomi-san.”

“Yes, thanks to Shou, I was able to move very efficiently in the second half, Shou, you might have a talent for customer service.”

“Oh, no. You're exaggerating, Apuesta.”

“Umm, no, I'm not.”

“Oh, well? You look happy Apuesta, it's rare to see you smile so carefree.”

“Huh? Oh, that's not true... ...”

Apuesta was embarrassed by Tomi's teasing, and Shou, Dird, and the others forget their fatigue and laughed at the scene, but Alea was still passed out.

“Ugh, sales are up. Three times as much as last month.”

“Huh?”

“Wow, that's great!”

“That's great.”

Shou, Dird, and Palty each widened their eyes in astonishment, while Tomi laughed and said, “Ho ho ho! Wow, that's amazing!”

“Yeah. The smoother the order flow, the better the sales, thanks to Shou and the others.”

“That's a long line. Waiting can be stressful. People often leave without waiting in line because the wait is too long, and many others leave before the end of the line. Maybe that's why so many people stayed this time.”

“I guess so. Shou, thank you so much.”

“No, no, not me! Dird and the others were with me.”

“But I think Shou did a great job! I still can't remember any of the numbers, but Shou did a great job!”

“Yes, you're right, Shou did work very hard. I was surprised too.”

“Oh, really? I'm embarrassed to be praised so much... ...”

Dird and Palty gave him words of praise as well, and Shou hid his face, feeling heat on his cheeks.

“Hohoho. I guess I'll have to reward Shou-chan with something in addition to his part-time job money. What do you think, Apuesta-chan?”

“Yes. A reward. I think it's good.”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well then, Apuesta-chan, here.”

“.....?”

Tomi tapped her lips with a finger. Apuesta just nodded her head and didn't seem to understand the gesture.

“What is it, don't you understand? What's the point of a woman rewarding a man? Come on, let's give it to him.”

“!”

Shou and Apuesta both jumped up in surprise.

“Oh, ...”

Apuesta turned red and slumped over, Shou was speechless and panicked as well, and Dird and Palty were rolling their eyes.

“What the hell, you two are so naive. It's no use then. I'll give you some vegetable seeds and seedlings. I've got some spare sickles and carpentry tools. ... ... That's right! How about some chickens? If you have chickens, they'll lay eggs and you can make egg dishes with them.”

“What? Oh, really? I think that would be helpful... ... Are you sure?”

“No problem, no problem. I'll give you a present later. It's a reward for all your hard work.”

“Oh wow! Thank you so much!” Shou readily accepted Tomi's suggestion. It was probably not something he would have wanted very much when he was living on the mainland, but it was something that made Shou very happy now. However, he still doesn't realize that he was changing.

While they were talking like this, a large door next to the gym opened and through it they saw a large truck backing into the building.

“Whoa? What, what?”

Shou was startled by the sudden appearance; Tomi, Apuesta, Dird, and Palty seemed to be used to it and started moving.

“That's for after school, Shou-chan. The stuff we were selling earlier was mostly precision parts and mechanical parts for work and stuff. This after-school section is mainly for normal everyday items.”

“Oh, I didn't know that. I thought that's why we don't have daily necessities... ... What? You mean there's one after school?

“Yes.”

“Yes, of course.”

Shou couldn't hide his despair at Apuesta and Tomi's words, he was already groggy. He hadn't known there would be a second round. The shock was immeasurable, as he had thought that everything was over.

“Huh ... ... huh, the time has finally come ... ... I've been waiting for this ... ...!” At that moment, Alea, who had been asleep for a long time, woke up and mumbled.

“Oh, Alea, are you okay to wake up? You should still be sleeping at ... ...”

“Don't be silly Shou, look at that! You shouldn't be sleeping!”

“What?”

He looked over and saw a number of cardboard boxes being unloaded from the back of the truck. Inside the boxes were a wide variety of household items, from food and clothing to toothbrushes, detergent, and shampoo. There were also a large number of luxury and entertainment items, including sweets, all of which were from foreign countries that he had never seen before.

“Oh, sweets ... ...” Shou was drawn to the presence of the sweets; he hadn't eaten any of them since arriving on the island, and the nostalgia almost made him reach for them.

But then Tomi pointed out.

“Shou-chan. Shou-chan, you shouldn't eat any of the sweets here. Well, if you're a freak like Alea who likes spicy, bitter, smelly, and unique flavors, you might want to try them since you'll get paid for your part-time work.”

“Oh, really, ...?” When he reviewed the products after Tomi's warning, he found a number of confectionaries with conspicuous foreign characters, some with poisonous colored packages and some with dangerous-looking skull marks, which certainly gave him a bad feeling.

But...

“Here it comes, here it comes! Here it is, here it is, here it is, here it is, here it is, here it is, here it is, here it is, here it is, here it is, here it is! It's no exaggeration to say that this is what I live for! Hahahahaha!”

Alea was drooling over the sweets with the most sparkling eyes he'd ever seen. Apparently, it was her favorite food. The girl who had been dying earlier had disappeared. She was already perfectly recovered.

“Haha, Alea really likes weird sweets~”

“Yes, she does. The problem is that we sometimes get damaged by them too... ...”

“Damage? Damage? Palty, what does that mean?”

“I'm sure Shou will figure it out one day. It won't be long... ...” Palty's meaningful words and expression gave Shou a mildly unpleasant feeling.

Then he noticed that Apuesta had disappeared.

Shou looked around for her, and eventually found Apuesta waving at the entrance of the gym.

“Shou, come over here and help me with the supplies.”

“Oh, yeah. I'll be right there.”

Apuesta led him out of the gym to the back of a truck parked on the side of the building.

“.....Shou, from now on you are unnamed adult clerk A (21).”

“What? What do you mean?”

“Come on, inside.”

“Uh, yeah. .....?”

The two of them walked into the back of the truck. And then Shou saw it. A lot of sparkling jewels...

“—This can't be ... ...!”

“Shou, don't say anything else out loud. You are nameless adult clerk A (21) ... ...”

“Na ... ... I see. That's what you call an adult situation... ...”

“Thank you for understanding so quickly.”

“But ... ..., why me?”

“... ...I want Shou to sell these DVDs.”

“What? Oh, why me?”

“I'm embarrassed because there are so many customers ... I'm also ... I'm embarrassed to hand over these things ...”

“Oh, ... that's right, that's right. I'm sure you'll be able to find a lot of people who are interested in this kind of thing. “

“Because ... ... this island is subject to extraterritoriality. All the things you can't see on the mainland.”

“Extraterritoriality! Yes, that's right... ... What the hell is this island ... ...!”

“... ...Shou, just so you know, the age limit is tailored to each country of origin.”

“What? I'm not going to buy it! I don't think I'm going to use my part-time job money for this! A-ha-ha-ha!”

“... ...No one said you can't buy it ... ...”

“Gosh, shucks... ...”

“... ...Shou's a perv.”

“No! No, no, no, no! It's a misunderstanding! Don't look at me like that!”

“... ...Kidding. By the way, I caught Mike trying to buy these before in disguise. He's been banned from the place ever since.”

“So, that was it. That’s why that guy said it was time to forgive him... ... But Mike... ..., he’s a man ... ...”

“... ...Shou... still sex... ...”

“What? It's a misunderstanding! There are a lot of beautiful girls around like Apuesta and her friends, but they won't buy this stuff, or rather, they can't!”

“... ... Eh?”

“Ah...”

“.....”

“.....”

“... ... So, I'm going to teach you how to use the cash register. Okay?”

“Oh, uh-uh-uh-uh. Oh, please.”

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The after-school sales ended just as the sky was turning red. Most of the product shelves that

had been built in the auditorium were empty, and it would have been safe to say that the sale was a great success.

“Oh no, good work. The sales were different when Shou-chan was there, after all.”

“No, not at all.”

Tomi said with a smile as she checked the sales. Shou, who was helping to clean up the store, was too embarrassed to look at Tomi's face. The after-school sales were still tiring, but unlike lunch, there were no specialized products, so the delivery of goods was much easier. He was still very tired physically, but it was also a pleasant exhaustion after his first day of work. And again, Alea had collapsed, and Dird and Palty were frantically nursing her back to health.

“That thing Shou-chan was selling, it used to be me and Apuesta-chan. It was so funny to see children and grandchildren of all ages shyly looking at the goods and shyly accepting them. It's a shame we didn't have that this time.”

“Ah, ha ha ... ...”

(Horrible ... ...! I'd never want to buy a book or DVD from a store run by an old lady I know, either. I'd never walk around the neighborhood again if someone smiled at me and said, “You've grown up, haven't you, Shou?!”) Shou was horrified at the thought, but Tomi just kept smiling and laughing.

“Hohoho. By the way, Mike-chan was a funny boy as always~”

“To - Tomi, ...” Shou thought back to the tragedy that had just occurred.

The after-school sales were overwhelmingly dominated by men. However, since Shou was in charge of selling the “product”, there were more adult customers than students. Mike, who was banned from the store, came in wearing a suspicious hermit-like costume and proudly said, “Give me this! This is a part of the “Cosplay Mee-chan's Lun Lun Diary Series. My first photo shoot! I'll buy it at the asking price!” I'll buy it at any price you want!” He was soon found out and banned again by Apuesta, but he cried and said, “No, no, I want it! I want it! At first glance, he looked like a fresh and attractive boy, but he was ruined in the worst possible way.

“Oh, would you describe that look as funny ... ...?”

“Hohoho. That's funny. Hey, Apuesta-chan?”

“Shh, I don't know ... ...” Apuesta's face turned red, and she turned away. Shou also felt embarrassed.

“Well, more importantly, Shou, here: ... ...” Shou received an envelope from Apuesta.

“It's not much, but it's for today's part-time job; I don't have Shou's e-card yet, so it's cash... ...”

“Oh, yeah, thanks.” Glancing at the contents of the envelope, Shou was astonished. “What? I can't believe I got this much!”

“Yeah. So, if you don't mind, can you do it again next month?”

“Sure! Thanks, I'll do my best next time!”

“Yeah.”

Apuesta smiled, and Shou couldn't help but be taken aback by her carefree smile.

“Dird, Alea, and Palty, too. Thank you all.”

“Yes~. But I'm exhausted~”

“Thank you all so much for your hard work. It's been a hard but fun time.”

They all thanked each other for their hard work. Then Alea mumbled in her sleep, “Ummm ... ... sweets ... my sweets ... ...” Everyone laughed together at that.

As he was loading all the remaining goods into the truck, Shou gently touched the envelope in his pocket and thought, (I got more than I thought I would... ... I don't mind saving it, but I wonder if I can use it for something useful... ... I think I'm going to visit Tomi's store.) While thinking about this, Shou put the cardboard boxes he was carrying on the back of the truck, when he heard a voice from behind him.

“.....Shou? Something on your mind?”

“Huh? Whoa!?” Startled by the sudden voice, Shou hit his arm on the corner of the cardboard he had just placed and winced.

“Shou, Shou? Are you okay?”

“Uh, yeah. I'm sorry.”

It was Apuesta who called out to him. She anxiously rushed over, took Shou's hand, and gently rubbed it.

“Pain, pain, go away.”

It was too classic a spell, though. Still, Shou felt as if the pain had really eased. That feeling made him happy.

“Oh, thank you Apuesta, I'm fine now!”

“Yeah... ... So, you looked kind of serious, are you troubled?”

“Huh? Oh, no, it's not like that. I'm just thinking about how I'm going to spend my part-time job money. I was thinking of buying something useful for my life.”

“Oh, I see... ... Take good care of it.”

“Yes, thank you.”

Thump! At that moment, there was a dull noise from behind, and when he turned around, he saw that a cardboard box had fallen down and its contents had popped out, probably from the impact of Shou's arm hitting it.

“Whoa! Oh, no!” Shou hurriedly tried to put the package back, but what he found in his hand was...

“Cosplay Mee-chan Lun Lun Diary Series. My First Photo Session Edition♪”

“Whaaaaaat!!!?”

It was a leftover product from a previous sale.

Shou was startled when he stared at the rather extreme packaging and immediately tried to shove them into the cardboard box, but...

“Wow, Shou, are you okay with Apuesta? I heard a loud voice!”

“That's ... ..., I see! I understand everything, Shou, you're a man!”

“Shou... ..., I'm pretty sure that in Japan, people under the age of eighteen are not allowed to have such things in their hands... ...”

“Whoa! No, guys! Dird don't look at me with such innocent eyes! And Alea, don't give me a thumbs up and laugh at me! Palty don't look at me like I'm a dirty little thing! Ugh!” Shou was surrounded by a lot of unsold things, and Dird and the others who came to see him saw him like that. And Apuesta...

“Shou... ... don't tell me... ... what you want to buy... ... things that are useful in life... ...”

“! No, no, no! No, no, no, Apuesta! It's just a misunderstanding!

But she looked at Shou with a blank stare. “... ...Shou is still naughty.”

“No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, ～～～～～～～～!”

Then, in an effort to clear up the misunderstanding, Shou spoke with a desperation rarely seen in recent years.

Eventually, all the luggage was loaded on the three trucks, the gymnasium was cleaned, and the tidying up was completed. Tomi, Apuesta, and Palty boarded each as drivers, and Dird and Alea each sat in the passenger seat. Shou also tried to get on the remaining one, but...

“Excuse me, Shou, would you mind going back to the tent first and preparing dinner? We'll be back as soon as we've cleaned up. Could you do that for me?”

“Oh, yeah. Okay, Palty.”

“I'll take care of it then. And Shou, please use that money carefully. There are no DVD rental stores on this island. Huhuhu.”

“Why am I supposed to go to a rental DVD store?”

Palty smiled with a smirk and a hint of fear, and Shou decided not to go against her.

Then Apuesta emerged from the other truck and said to Shou. “Shou, your work clothes will be washed tomorrow at school. You can leave them in the classroom.”

“Got it. Everyone be careful!”

“Yeah. Thanks for everything today, Shou.”

Shou watched the truck go away and returned to his classroom.

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“Shou ... ... you're a tease ... ...!”

“Whoa! Ma, Mike!”

When Shou returned to the classroom, what was waiting for him was Mike, a boy sitting on the gym with an insidious aura of dread in the corner of the classroom, which was already getting dark. Shou didn't notice him until Mike spoke to him and was so surprised that he jumped.

“Almost ... ... almost got it! I've been wanting to get my hands on one of these for a while now. I'm sure I could have gotten my hands on a copy of the “Cosplay Meechan Lun Lun Diary Series: My First Photo Session”! You! You! If only you'd given me the product earlier!”

“Don't say the title out loud! I mean, what choice did I have? Apuesta was really pissed, you know! Oh, and it wasn't me who paid the bill, it was the unnamed adult clerk A (21). I don't accept any complaints.”

“... ..., you're talking too much!” Mike clenched his teeth, and Shou's response was beginning to be curt and dismissive.

“Hmm, that's okay... ... I'm not that hard of a listener!”

“What do you mean? What do you mean?”

“Shou, I want you to lend me the treasure you bought with your part-time job today for a day. Then we can put this whole thing behind us! Then we can be friends again tomorrow! A friend at heart! Come on! Let's make a friendship with me!”

“No, I'm sorry ... ..., but I can't buy it because of the age limit.” Shou said crisply, and then...

“No .....!!!” Mike collapsed on his side with a shocked expression on his face and lay there for a while without moving or blinking. But eventually, he got up and gave his usual light smile. “Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ... Thank you for your hard work, ... Shou. Get some rest tonight. ... ... Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ...”

“Huh? Oh, wait, Mike!”

Mike, who looked like he was about to fall over again, still smiled, showing his white teeth, and staggered off. He must have decided that he had no more use for Shou.

“... ... Haha, maybe Tomi was right about him being funny.” Shou quickly changed his clothes, grabbed his bag, and walked straight out of the classroom. “... ... Alright! Let's go!” His feet moved a little more nimbly than usual.

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“Hey, hey, Shou~”

“Yeah? What's wrong, Dird?”

It was the night after he finished his part-time job.

Dird and the others had returned from cleaning up and they were preparing dinner in front of the tent as usual when Dird asked.

“What are you going to spend that money on in the end~? It's not for that DVD I saw earlier, is it?”

“Of course not! I've had enough of your bullshit! I explained to you that it was all a misunderstanding!”

“Calm down, Shou, it's only natural for a man. You know, I'm an understanding woman, right?”

“Yes, thank you... ... is different. It's not like I'm encouraging you at all, Alea. That's why I have to buy that stuff...”

“I see... ...Shou, that's what you call Japanese flippancy, isn't it? I've been learning about this culture in recent years, so I've learned a lot.”

“No! You don't have to take those notes seriously, and neither does Palty!”

“... ...Shou's naughty.”

“Apuesta, don't do that again!”

Shou was torn to shreds by all the psychological attacks, and to be honest, he was on the verge of tears.

Then Dird said, “Oh,” as if she remembered something. “Oh, by the way, Shou, I got this too!”

“Yeah? What? Dird.”

“Ehehehe ... ...!” Dird dug her fingers into her cleavage and proudly pulled out an egg.

“? An egg?”

“Yeah! Tomi gave me this one too, and I heard a knocking sound from the inside just now, so I think it's about to be born!”

“What? It's going to hatch?”

“Yeah. Here you go, Apuesta!”

“Uh-uh... ...” Apuesta shyly covered her breasts with her hand and took out another egg, just like Dird did. Dird took that egg too and handed the two eggs to Shou with a “yes”. Shou hurriedly opened his hand and stared at the two eggs on his hand appalled.

“You were supposed to get a chicken, but Dird's an idiot and insisted on getting these...”

“But we got two instead, remember?”

That's when Dird said.

Piki... ... Piki... ... ... Crack! There was a small sound, and the two eggs cracked almost simultaneously. The chicks emerged from inside. It was the moment of the birth of life.

“Wow! It's born! Oh!”

“So cute! ......! I'm so surprised.”

Shou and the others each reacted with surprise, observing the tiny life in front of them.

“Piyo. PiyoPiyo!”

“PiyoPiyo.”

The two chicks chirped as they looked up at Shou. Their cute voices were as innocent as a child

who thinks Shou is his parent.

“—Ehehe. You're so cute~♪”

The chicks were chirping away in the incubator that Tomi had loaned them along with the farm tools and eggs. Dird was looking at the chicks without even bothering to eat dinner.

“Dird, it's fine to love them, but please make sure you eat first.”

“Uh huh.”

Palty chided her, and Dird hurriedly gobbled up rice and sashimi. She looked like a food fighter. Then, Dird immediately went back to the chicks.

“Damn, you're a real pain in the ass, aren't you?”

After Apuesta and Palty had cleaned up their meal, they joined Dird and the others to meet the chicks.

“She's so cute!

“It's soothing, even for me.”

“Tiny ... ...”

“Huh. I guess so.”

All of them were looking at the chicks with motherly kindness on their faces, and Shou was watching them with a smile on his lips. (I guess they're all girls after all... ...)

As Shou was thinking about this, Dird suddenly looked up and looked at Shou.

“Hey, hey, Shou! What should we name these girls?”

“Names? Well, ..., but we need to know if they're male or female.”

“They’re both girls.” Apuesta who immediately assured him. Apparently, she had already checked the gender from her earlier observation. She's like a chick appraiser, Shou thought admiringly.

“I see. Good for you, Shou! You're both going to lay eggs!”

“Yes. But how long will it take for them to turn into chickens?”

“I think six months should be fine.”

“Ha, half a year is a long time to ... ... cook eggs.”

Shou chuckled at Apuesta's words, then Dird reminded him.

“Oh, so Shou, what are you going to name them? I'm thinking Sashimi and Wasabi!”

“Hai, no thanks!”

“～～～～? Alea, you're terrible! Why can't I name them?”

“Do I have to tell you why? ... ... I mean, food names are so confusing.”

“Hmm. I'm sure Shou has the right to name it. It's a very important role as a parent.”

“Ummm... ... ... Even if you say so, it's still a lot of pressure... ...”

The girls gazed at Shou as he pondered over Palty's words.

“Piyo?” “PiyoPiyo.”

The two birds chirped at Shou as if to urge him on. Seeing this, Shou had an “aha” moment.

“That's right! How about Pī and Piyo? I think it's easy to understand.”

Dird and the others were silent for a while, but then .....

“Pī-chan and Piyo-chan, huh? ... ... Yeah! So cute!”

“It's a little too cheesy, though. But it's okay, isn't it?”

“Simple and easy to remember is important... ...”

“Yes, I think that's a good name, Shou. I think it's a good name.”

They all said that smilingly and happily, and Shou was relieved.

“Well, now that we've decided on a name, shall we go home?”

Palty said as she stood up, but Dird started to protest.

“What ～～～～! Oh no! I'm going to stay at Shou's today!”

“Huh? What are you saying out of the blue, Dird?”

“Miron-sensei stayed there too! I can stay too, can't I?”

“Dird, the four of us talked about it before, that you shouldn't act like that alone... ...”

“Ughhhh. That's right... ...”

Dird was admonished by Alea and Apuesta, and she turned her head, looking like she was about to cry. Then she looked up with a huff as if she had thought of something.

“That's right! Then we should all sleep over together!”

“Eh?”

“Pī-chan and Piyo-chan have just been born, you know? It's hard to leave them alone with Shou. Besides, there are snakes, small carnivores, and birds of prey on the island. It's dangerous!”

Alea and the others looked at each other as Dird spoke with great intensity.

“Well, ..., that's true, but...”

“That's a decent opinion for Dird... ...”

“Yes, that's true. It would be too much to leave a newborn chick to Shou alone... ...”

Dird's expression brightened as the three of them began to agree. It seemed that Alea and the others also wanted to stay if they could.

Just then, a new person appeared.

“Hey! Of course, it's not okay for young innocent girls to stay at a boy's house!”

“Whoa!!!?” They all shouted in unison. If you look, it was Miron who appeared.

Miron gulped down the bottle of wine she was holding in her left hand and exhaled with a red face.

“S-Sensei? Are you drunk? ... .. What's with that outfit?” Shou noticed that Miron was wearing only a thin camisole, and her underwear was completely visible. Dird and the girls were all astonished.

“What kind of sluts are these young girls these days? What the hell are they thinking? You should be suspended. You should be ashamed of yourselves! This is delicious!”

“I don't need a teacher to tell me what to do!” Everyone must have thought that. But no one said a word about it. It was because they were completely dumbfounded.

“Sensei, what are you thinking in that outfit? Please hurry up and get dressed!”

“I refuse!”

“Why are you being so arrogant?”

Shou didn't know what to say, and as was at the end of his rope. Dird noticed something.

“Sensei? That's the one that D-chan and the others chose yesterday, right?”

“Ah...”

All the members of the group were once again united in their voices at that. Then they understood Miron's situation.

Shou asked on behalf of him.

“That ... ... Sensei? Could it be that... ... Minamida-san rejected... ... you... ...?”

“Shhhhhh! I wasn't rejected! He's not here! He's not here! He's not here! I went to all this trouble to polish up this body and even put on his favorite lingerie... ...!” Gulp, gulp, gulp. Miron gulped down the wine with great gusto, she was completely drunk.

“Anyway, Miron, why are you still wearing such light clothes?”

Alea asked, and Miron replied, wiping her mouth roughly.

“Because I took them off in the bathroom at Minamida's place! When he came back, I was going to surprise him by coming out of the bathroom! But he didn't come back! So, I stripped in the bathroom for you!”

“Eeeeee! Wait, what are you doing, Sensei!”

“Hahahaha! That's not fair!”

Miron laughed, her breath reeking of alcohol, and Shou and the others looked at each other with disgust at having to deal with an overly troublesome drunk and gave a small sigh.

“Huh. I'm pissed off, so I'm staying at Shou-kun's place again today. Is that okay?”

“Why? Please don't do this two days in a row! I'll have trouble sleeping again!”

“Not only can you stay at home with your beautiful homeroom teacher, but you can also sleep with her! It's a unique opportunity! You're going to miss that chance, Cherry Boy? Think about it!”

“Cherry?!! That's none of your business! Please hurry up and leave!”

“That's right, Sensei. If we can't stay here, then you can't either!”

“... ... If I'm with you as a guardian, you can stay here too, right?”

“Yes!”

At Miron's words, Dird and the others immediately made use of the waterproof blue sheets and mosquito nets they had brought from wherever they were, and quickly built their own tents.

“Hmph, Shou-kun? Are you saying that you won't let the maidens stay here after all this?”

“Uuuhhh... ..., haha, I already understand... ..., do what you want... ....”

“Huh. Negotiations are done. Now you guys! Prepare a meal for me! Then you will be free and at rest!”

“Yes, sir!” Dird and the others shouted in unison and saluted at Miron's words. Dird headed out to sea with a waterproof flashlight and a harpoon in her hand, while Alea and the rest of the crew worked hard to prepare the food. It didn't take long for the food to be served to Miron.

“Mmm, good work. Now you guys are free to spend the rest of the day as you please.”

“Yes, ～～～～! Pī-chan, Piyo-chan, come play with me!”

“Oh, Dird, wait!” “I'm also .....” “Huh. Me too.”

The four girls who had been captivated by the chick's charms dove into one tent, incubator in hand.

Shou, who had been silently watching them, went with the flow.

“Well, I'd better get to my tent, too... ...” He mumbled fearfully, but…

“No, you can't. I've got a lot of questions for you. I'm not letting you go!”

“Geez!”

Miron grabbed Shou by the collar as he tried to run away, causing Shou to fall on his ass.

“Ugh. Sensei, please don't make me do this two days in a row!”

“Oh. Then can I have one day in a row?”

“No, please don't do it all the time!”

“Damn it. I don't know why Minamida and Shou-kun are so unhappy with me.” Miron sighed with a hand on her cheek, her face sorrowful.

“Oh, my God, ..., wouldn't it be faster to list the things I'm not happy about?” Shou rubbed his butt and said what he was thinking in a whisper, but Miron didn't seem particularly offended, rather she said with interest.

“I'd like to hear what Shou thinks is wrong with me, just for reference.”

“Huh? Well, that's... ...” Shou was upset and stared at her. He looked away and mumbled… “... ... appearance?” He whispered.

“Hey chicken boy! What's with that pause! If you're going to say it, say it without a pause!”

“Oh, it's a pause of compassion, isn't it! I can't think of anything else, so I thought I'd at least say it softly... ...”

“That's not manly at all! If you're a man, be hard like this! Straight to the bottle...”

“That's why it's no good to say things like that!”

“Gghh. I know, I know! That's why I've been trying so hard to choose the right pants and dress in such an embarrassing way!”

“What? ... ..., you were aware of that?”

“Of course! I'm not a lascivious woman!”

Shou froze in surprise, but Miron continued with a slight blush on her cheeks. “It's ... ... the first day we met, Minamida said to me, “Why is it that this type of person is always an old man inside?”

“Old man... ... Minamida, do you know anyone else who's like that ... ...?”

“Hmm. I don't know, but I'm pretty sure she's my enemy.”

“What? Why is that?”

“You're so dense, Shou-kun. Of course, it's Minamida's wife!”

“Oh, ... I see, so she's your enemy. He's got a wife, so you might as well give up now, right? It's a problem for a teacher to aim for infidelity... ...”

“You're so cold, Shou-kun... ... Are you asking me to give up my dream?”

Shou said with a bit of a wince. “What do you mean by dream, ... do you really need to marry Minamida-san?”

“Yes! That's what I'm supposed to do!”

“Wow... ..., Minamida-san is in trouble too.”

“Shit! Oh my god! Why isn't Minamida attacking me?!”

“Whoa! No! Stop it!”

Miron grabbed Shou by the collar and shook him wildly back and forth.

“Well, then, why don't you try attacking him yourself?

Shou said as he was shaken, Miron stopped and replied.

“No, I can't! Because Minamida is pretty strong!”

“So, you've already attacked him!”

“Yes! And then he just threw me into the ocean! That's terrible!” Miron was in tears, and even though she had been drinking, it seemed that she meant what she said. “Hiccup... ..., I don't know what to do!”

“Well, that's a line between me and Minamida-san, but... ...” Having said that, Shou still felt some sympathy for Miron. She's just terribly clumsy, but maybe she's surprisingly pure at heart, Shou thought to himself.

At that time, Dird came out of the tent and said, “Hey, Shou, you want to come too? Shou replied lightly, “Okay,” and then rubbed Miron's back.

“Sensei is tired. Dird and the others want to see you, why don't you come and watch the chicks with us? I'm sure it will soothe you.” Shou said.

“Ugh ... ... chicks?” Miron looked up with tears in her eyes, Shou nodded and took Miron's hand.

“Let's go. Here, please stand up.” Trying to sound as gentle as possible, Shou led Miron to Dird and the others' tent like a kindergartener.

“Hey guys, Sensei wants to see the chicks too. Can you let her in?”

“Yes! Of course we can! Here, Sensei, over here!”

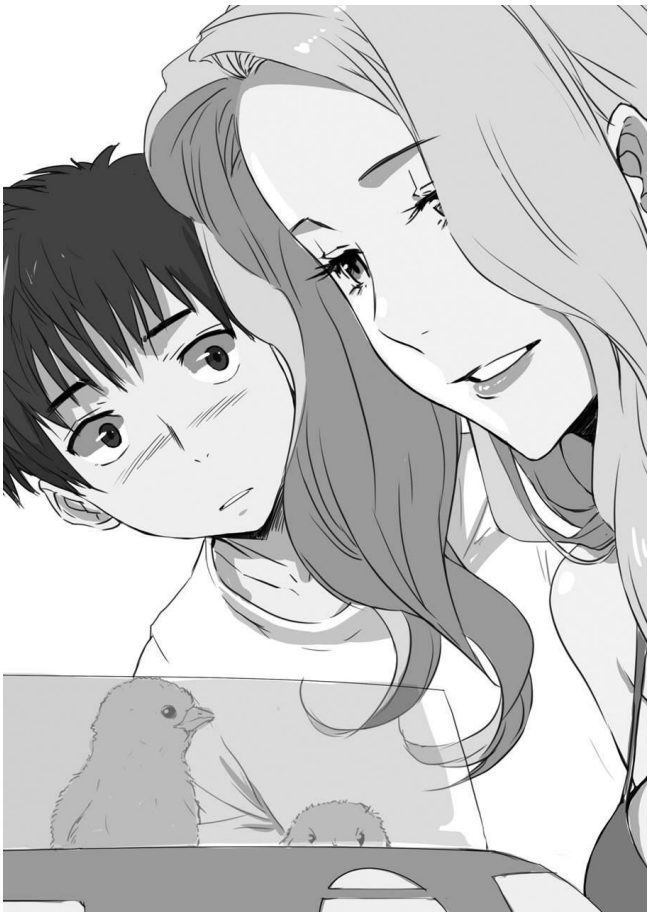
Dird opened the mosquito net and Shou entered the tent, supporting a slightly wobbly Miron. They all sat Miron down in front of the incubator and looked at the chicks together.

“Piyo!” “Piyo! PiyoPiyo!”

“What do you think Sensei? Pī-chan and Piyo-chan, aren't they cute?”

“... ... Yeah. So cute.” Miron replied honestly, her eyes looking at the chicks were kind and compassionate, and her feminine appearance was powerful enough to make Shou's heartbeat faster.

(Wow ....., if you show him this face, I think even Minamida will be swayed .....) Shou felt as if he had caught a glimpse of Miron's true self and was thrilled for a while.



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– ping..... ping..... ping.....

It was a dimly lit submarine. The crew members were at their posts, looking nervous.

And all of them were apparently not Japanese.

“—Captain. We will soon reach the target area. There is no abnormality in the vicinity at the moment.”

“Right. All right, shut down the engines. We'll navigate silently from here. Remain on alert.”

“Roger that. Engines stop!”

With that voice, the submarine's engines stopped, and it continued to coast silently through the water. The only sound inside the ship was that of a sonar detector.

Soon, a silhouette of something appeared in the darkness of the ocean floor. It looked somewhat like a person, but the crew did not seem to notice it.

The captain, wearing a big hat, announced, “It's about time. As soon as we reach the target area, we will surface and launch a missile attack. At the same time, we will infiltrate our operatives...”

That's when it happened. Zooooon! With a roar, the ship suddenly vibrated loudly, a high-pitched alarm sounded, and the red emergency lights flickered violently. The inside of the ship suddenly became noisy.

“What, what? What's happening! Status report!”

“I don't know, sir! Suddenly, the ship's hull... wow!”

With one more violent vibration, the ship tilted and the sailors fell as if they were jumping up and down. The all the lights in the ship went out, and visibility became impossible... ...

“Damn it! What the hell! What the hell is going on?

There was no one there who could answer the impatient captain's question.

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“Hmm ... ... hmm? Heavy ... ... wow! Dark!?” Shou woke up sweaty and breathing heavily, but he couldn't see anything at all as it felt like something was covering him in front of him.

“Hey, what is it? I think my luggage has collapsed... ...” And then he felt a soft, warm touch on his hand as he moved it... “.....What?” Then he realized. In front of Shou's eyes, who had forcibly raised his upper body, Miron was asleep, almost completely naked, leaning against him.

“..... Aaaaah!” After a pause, Shou rushed out of the tent, and Dird and the others looked back at him with a surprised “wow”. Apparently, they were in the middle of preparing breakfast together.

“Good morning Shou, what's the matter, you're in such a hurry~?”

“Oh, mi, everyone. Ah, that, ah, ah, ...!” Shou uttered in an inarticulate voice, shivering and pointing at his tent.

“Did you have a scary dream? Go wash your face and you'll feel better, Shou.”

“No, no, um, ...”

“What is it Shou, did you see a ghost or something?”

Alea sat up and tried to peek into Shou's tent. Huffing, Shou hurriedly blocked Alea's way.

“No, no! No, no, no! I mean, I didn't do anything! I just woke up and the teacher was there!”

“Hmm? Oh, you mean that? It's okay. We're not going to misunderstand you or anything.”

“... ... What?” Shou finally calmed down, and Dird and the others laughed together.

“Because, you know, we saw Miron go into Shou's tent last night.”

“... ... What? Why didn't you stop her...? We even had a teacher's tent set up for that purpose!”

“I'm sorry, I'm sorry. We were all too busy taking care of the chicks. See?”

“Haha, sorry Shou~?” I'm sorry Shou... ...”

“I'm sorry, Shou.”

“Oh, yeah, that's right... ...”

Shou could no longer say anything after being apologized to. Then Alea, perhaps thinking to

follow Shou, tapped Shou on the shoulder and said, “Don't worry. If something happens with Miron, it'll be all Miron's fault. Even if there's a court case, I'll testify that it's impossible for Shou, who's a DT.”

“DT! I'm never going to have a trial like that!”

Alea giggled.

Miron suddenly jumped out from behind Shou, who was upset from this morning.

“Whoa! Sensei!

“Shit! Out of the way, this is an emergency! It's leaking!”

Miron bounced off Shou, Alea and the others and ran off towards the jungle bushes. Shou didn't even think about what Miron was doing as she dashed into the bushes, he just sighed.

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Miron then headed to school much earlier than Shou and the others, and while the students were coming to school, she washed off her sweat in the shower in the small bathroom that she had set up in the small room next to the nurse's office, and when she returned to the nurse's office completely naked, she was just about to start putting on her underwear when she noticed something.

“... ...Hmm?”

What caught her eye was the LCD monitor of the computer she had left on. There were several online news reports on it. She paid particular attention to one of them, and while she was completely naked, she operated the mouse and opened the news article.

“... ... Hmm. I see.” She mumbled, and the image photo in her eyes was of a ... ... certain submarine, stranded on the coast of the United States.

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That day, the school was abuzz with talk of chicks - Pī and Piyo. The reason was that Dird and her friends had brought the incubator to school.

“What do you think, Shou-chan? Do you think you can raise the chicks?”

“Oh, Tomi. I'm not sure yet, but... ... I think I've been made their daddy, so I'll do my best.”

It was while they were having lunch in the school cafeteria that Shou saw not only Dird and his classmates but all of them crowded around Pī and Piyo's incubator, cackling. It was there that Tomi spoke to him from behind.

“Hahaha, that's a good mindset. But what do you think? You're starting to feel a little more relaxed about life, aren't you?”

“Yes. All of my belongings were ruined, and for a while I wondered what was going to happen to me, but it turned out to be quite manageable. Thank you very much for all the food you’ve brought me.”

“You're welcome. Well, it's the kind of thing you experience sooner or later when you leave your parents and become independent. I guess it's rare to be this extreme. Hahahaha.”

“That's right ... ... haha.” Shou laughed wryly, and then he let out his honest feelings. “But I ... ... haven't been able to be independent at all. Since I came to this island, I've always been helped by Dird and the others... ... I feel a bit bad about that; I might not be able to take care of Pī and Piyo by myself... ...”

“Oh, I see... Shou-chan is also a boy. That's something to think about.” Tomi nodded her head and patted Shou on the back.

“Then why don't you do something for them, Shou-chan?”

“Huh? You mean, from me?”

“Yes, you should. Men have always given gifts to women to make them happy. I like surprises, too. It's important to get a gift that you didn't expect to get.”

“A gift from... ...?” (That's a good idea), thought Shou, who still had all the money from his part-time job. But he didn't know what to give them as gifts.

Tomi smirked and continued. “Shou-chan, didn't those girls want something before?”

“Huh?”

“You're so dull. You see, when Shou-chan first came to this island to ... ... my store.”

“Tomi-san's... ... ... ah! I remember that time, Dird and the others...”

“Okay, then come to my store after school. You'll need enough for four people, so I'll give you a pretty good deal.”

“Yes! Please do!”

The money for the part-time job would probably be completely gone, but Shou was not bothered at all. He was happy to be able to do something for the girls.

And after school.

“Ah, hey, hey Shou! Pī-chan and Piyo-chan, can you take them home for me?”

“Huh? Oh, yeah, sure, but what about Dird and the others?”

“Yeah, yeah. I have some business to attend to. Well, Shou, I'll see you later!”

“Sorry, Shou.”

“Sorry, Shou.”

“Excuse me, Shou, please.”

Alea and the others followed Dird out of the classroom early, and Shou looked after them with a pout, incubator in hand.

“I was wondering how I was going to fool Dird and the others before going to Tomi's place, but I guess ..... it turned out all right. Alright. I should go too!”

Shou said goodbye to Mike and the others and left the classroom to fulfill his promise to Tomi.

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It was the time of day when the whole island was glittering in vermilion, and the evening when the island, which was so quiet, became even calmer. Shou was busy poking the harpoon, but he didn't catch a single fish today.

“O~i Shou～～～～!”

“Hmm?”

Shou hurriedly headed towards Dird and the others. As he was getting out of the water, he saw Dird and the others waving at him with a large package in their hands.

“Hey, guys, you're here. I mean, what's happening?”

“What's wrong with you, Shou; it looks like you were harpooning, but there's nothing in the bucket. What the hell is wrong with you Shou?”

“Alea that's bullying! That's bullying! I didn't catch anything anyway, I'm sorry!”

“Shou, you're doing a great job.”

“Yes, Shou, don't worry about what Alea says. Alea?”

Alea was laughing, but when Palty called her name with a smile on her face, she stopped laughing and said apologetically, “I'm sorry.” She seemed to have sensed the anger that lay within Palty.

Dird stood in front of Shou, smiling as she opened a large package and showed it to him.

“Today, I've brought all kinds of food from home, as well as a sleepover kit! Now I can stay with you until morning... Pī-chan and Piyo-chan are also with me...”

“Piyo?” PiyoPiyo?”

“Boo! Ah, ah, until morning!”

Dird was holding a large sports bag in her hand and seemed to be carrying a tent and other things.

Alea, Apuesta, and Palty also unpacked their bags, and Shou was baffled to find out that they were seriously planning to stay here.

“I-I mean, no, but that's for me, right? That's bad! It's not like I'm going to let a girl sleep out here in the open!”

“I like sleeping in tents...” Dird said with a big smile on her face, and although Shou couldn't tell if she was saying it to cheer him up or not, he could tell that she wasn't lying.

“Don't worry about it Shou, we're doing this because we want to.”

“Oh, Alea... ...”

“Yeah. So Shou don't worry about anything.”

“Apuesta... ...”

“Huh... Shou, why don't you take everyone at their word this time? I think it would be fun for all of us to spend the night together.”

“Palty... ...” The kindness of the four of them sank in, and Shou nodded, impressed. “.....Yeah, okay. I'll take your word for it then. Please take care of me this evening.”

“Yes!” The four of them replied in unison and laughed, thus starting the night for the five of them.

Dird and the others immediately started to pitch their tents, but there were only three tents standing, including Shou's, which was one short. When Shou pointed this out to them...

“Hmm? Oh, that's it. See, that's because Palty's claustrophobic. She's afraid of being alone in one tent. Pfft. She's a cute one for such a solid-looking young lady!”

“Huh? Soooo, really?”

“A, Alea!”

Palty, who had been working elsewhere, came at Alea with a red face, apparently having heard her. Apparently, it was true, because Alea said, “Oh my God! I'm sorry, I'm sorry!” Alea apologized, holding her hands out in front of her to soothe Palty.

Palty looked unusually flustered and said to Shou.

“It's not that I'm afraid of being alone or that I'm lonely, you know! It's just that I get strangely anxious when I'm alone in a small space, ..., so that's why! Please don't think I'm being childish!

“Um, ... uh, yeah. I don't think otherwise.”

“! Are you sure, ...? Don't you think that's pathetic?”

“Oh, no, I don't think so. It's just that Palty looks very mature, so I thought it was cute that there was a little gap.”

“.....! It's not that I think she's cute... ... That's not true... ...”

“Oh .....”

Palty's reaction made Shou blush as he realized that he had said something embarrassing.

Seeing them squirming, Alea shrugged her shoulders and Apuesta smiled, but Dird didn't hear any of this and was happily shouting “Wow!” The tension was so high.

Then Palty pulled herself together, coughed, clapped her hands and said, “Well, now that we've finished setting up the tents, why don't we take a break and have some tea?

Alea clapped her hands as if she had just thought of something.

“That's right. I was able to buy a lot of sweets with the money from my part-time job, and I brought some with me today! Let's all have some for tea!”

“Eh?”

Dird, Apuesta and Palty froze at the sight of Alea happily pulling out a bag of sweets. Shou was the only one who didn't understand why they froze and was confused in a different way.

“Look at this, Shou! This looks delicious. The packaging design is too weird, and the color is too poisonous, it's like a bad stimulus!”

“Yeah, I guess so... ...?”

It was obviously a foreign snack, but at first glance it didn't look that suspicious. However, Dird and the others were shaking like small animals from earlier.

“Okay! Let's open the bag!”

And then Alea put her hand on the bag...

“Whoa, whoa, ～～～～! We have to get out of here! Shou, please evacuate quickly!

“What? What?”

For some reason, the three of them started to run away at a frightening pace, and Shou just stared at Alea and Dird, not understanding what they meant.

“Ah! Pī-chan, Piyo-chan!” Dird noticed the chicks and rushed back, grabbing the incubator and trying to escape. But it was already too late...

Poof!

The bag of sweets Alea was holding opened with a loud pop, and a strange colored smoke came out of it. At the same time, a terrible smell covered the whole area...

“!? ..... ga-ha!”

“Kyaaaah! Shou is dead ah ～～～～～～! Oh, Pī and Piyo are convulsing too!”

With the distant screams of Dird and the others still in his ears, Shou lost consciousness and passed out.

In the midst of all this, Shou was sure that he saw Miron's luxury cruiser running out of control, splitting the sea and raging through the waves. It was approaching at a tremendous speed, with the sound of a roaring engine in the distance.

“Ah, Alea, you little ...!”

Shou and the others were deflated by the spirit of Miron, who seemed to be in a rather serious mood.

Miron pointed at her cruiser and said, “What are you going to do? My ship's gone up to here!”

“No, ... didn't think the smell would get to Miron's ship.”

“Shit! Don't talk back to your teacher!”

The stench of Alea's open sweets reached Miron's nose as she was moving the ship, and she nearly fainted from the unbelievable smell and made a mistake, cruising up to Shou and the others' tent. Now there was no way to get back to the sea without a major overhaul.

“It's unfortunate that the gas was so volatile, ...”

“Ugh... I'm so glad Pī and Piyo are safe.” Palty mumbled as she placed her hand on her forehead, Dird, still holding the incubator, was in tears and Apuesta was nodding off, looking much worse for wear. Alea seemed to be the only one who was okay.

What they found out was that the bag of sweets Alea had brought was a special type of fresh pastry that fermented inside, and during the fermentation process, it produced a terrible smelling gas. The smell was so bad that Shou fainted.

“Are you okay too Shou~?”

“Uh, yeah. I saw a flower garden for a moment, though... ... Haha.”

“Shou, take it easy and get some rest... ...”

“Yes. Thanks, Apuesta.”

With the help of Dird and Apuesta, Shou woke up after his first near-death experience. He rubbed his still blurry eyes and took a deep breath to get some fresh air. The smell was already gone, and he could breathe without worry.

“Well, well, Miron, some sacrifice is unavoidable. We've got all this good food to eat. Everyone, just think of it as an ordeal and endure it. Life is a journey of overcoming trials, isn't it?”

“Aaaaareeaaaaaa! You're not sorry for anything, are you?”

“Whoa! Come on, come on, Miron, eat this and calm down.” Alea said, shoving her hand into Miron's mouth with a bag of sweets. It was a poisonous purple color...

“Muguugu? What the hell, how is this delicious...?” Miron blew out a huge amount of sweets and continued to scream, “Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!” She ran off somewhere while continuing to shout strange noises.

“S-sensei!”

Miron first crouched down in front of a small fountain and rinsed her mouth out over and over again. After that, she munched on some herbs that seemed to be growing nearby, chewed them like gum, spit them out, and rinsed her mouth again, over and over again. The sight gave Shou a creeping sense of the horror of that candy.

“Oh, ..., I remember when Tomi said that we shouldn't buy any sweets that come into this island... ...”

“Yeah. That's... ... one of the ones rumored to be the scariest.” Apuesta mumbled, “I guess that's why Dird and the others ran away as soon as they found out. Remembering the part-time job, Shou now understood the meaning of Tomi's words.

“Apuesta! You're the one who sold it! What is it, what is it? It's not safe to eat, is it? It's some kind of new chemical weapon or something!”

“It's been confirmed that it's not harmful to the body... ... But there's a warning on... ...”

“A warning? Give me that. Alea!”

“Oh!”

Alea was snatched up by Miron with a bag of candy. Miron stared at the bag, pinching her nose with a grim face, and read the sentence written on it.

“What the hell? ‘To be opened with P4 level protection’...? Huh! What the hell is this? Alea! You didn't read this, did you? You didn't read it!”

“Sorry, sorry. The font was too small.”

“That is not an excuse!” Miron seemed to be really upset; she must have tasted something unique because she was always so aloof and angry with tears in her eyes. Shou was curious, but he couldn't bring himself to eat it.

“Shit! This stuff is not something people should be eating!”

“Really? Even though it tastes so good?” When Miron handed the bag back to her, Alea put the bag to her mouth, shook it upside down, and devoured the entire contents in a flash. Alea's expression was bright as she chewed on it, and she seemed to really think it was delicious... ...

To everyone's horror, Alea had brought two bags of it with her.

“We'll keep it under lock and key.” Palty and the others had stored the other bag in a case - or rather, sealed it - and were going to bury it in the ground. Alea stared at it in frustration, but she couldn't complain since she had caused so much trouble.

“Oh, no. I went to a lot of trouble to get that... ... That's pretty expensive, huh?”

“Ugh. I mean, Alea, your mouth stinks!”

“What? Seriously? Oh yeah, I forgot to use this.”

Dird pointed out, and Alea swallowed the odor-eliminating pill that came with the pastry bag

and sprayed her mouth with a small mouth deodorant.

“Good. That should do it, right?”

“You're not normal when you have that stuff on you!”

Shou and the others deeply agreed with Dird's cry. Anyway, this was how the stinky candy case was successfully solved.

“More importantly, the... ... problem is this.” Apuesta murmured as she looked at Miron's cruiser nearby.

Shou and the others could only look up at it and say, “Indeed, ...”

“Haha! It's really amazing! I wonder if the rocks around there are like a runway?”

“I mean, isn't it more amazing that Miron is unharmed?”

“Shit! That's not for you to say, Alea!”

“Oh, please calm down, Sensei. What are you going to do now? You can't just leave this ship here... ...”

Palty intervened between Miron and Alea, and Miron bared her fangs for a while, but then sighed and said, “Huh,” while holding her head.

“Well, ... repairing it and getting it to the ocean would be a massive undertaking, and it would take a long time. It's... ... no use. Let's just live here!”

“Eh!?” Shou was naturally taken aback by the too sudden words. He wondered what kind of disturbing thing he could suddenly say.

“What? I'll pay Shou-kun the land rent, so you don't have to worry.”

“No, no, that's not what I meant! But you see, you're going to live on this ship, aren't you? What about your house?”

“Home? Oh, you don't have to worry about that. There's a harbor facility on the coast near the branch school, and I used this ship as my main sleeping place while borrowing electricity from the facility. In other words, this ship itself is my home.”

“What? You've been living on this ship?”

“Well, it's true that a ship of this level would be equipped with most of the facilities... ...”

Shou was surprised to learn the truth, and Alea was convinced as she looked up at the ship; she had always liked machines, and apparently, she was interested in this ship as well.

“But I don't want to be asked to live here out of the blue! I mean, my parents are planning to come here too...”

“Oh, I forgot to tell you that your parents have decided to live on the mainland until their house is built here. And there's still no word on when they'll be able to build a house here.”

“What? Is that so?

“Yes. And yes, ... I'll give you this boat as a thank you when the new one is ready! How about that? I think that's a great deal, don't you?”

“What do you mean ... ..., but isn't this ship pretty expensive ... ...?”

“Hmm? Well, yes. If an average Japanese businessman were to be reincarnated four or five times, his lifetime wages would be enough to buy it.”

“Ehhhhh, so expensive!?”

“It's insured, next time I'll get a bigger one. Hmmm...”

Ignoring the shocked Shou, Miron mulled over the idea of building the next ship, but it was no longer something he could follow.

“Hey, hey, Sensei. But when will that new ship arrive?”

“That's right. If we order and build it now, it will take about two years if all goes well.”

“Two years? Wait, Doctor! Wait! Time, time, time! You're going to build it now? Are you going to stay here until then? Time, time, time!”

“Because it's not mass-produced. It's custom-made. There's also the matter of the interior, and shipbuilding takes a lot of time. Until then, we'll be your neighbors, okay? Shou-kun♪.”

“No, no, no. .....!”

“So, Alea, you know a bit about machines, don't you? You have tomorrow afternoon and the next day off, so you can help me refurbish this ship! That'll make this whole thing go away. Also, Dird, Apuesta, Palty, you should come too.”

“Geez, seriously?”

Alea had a disgusted look on her face. She sighed and felt sad because Apuesta said nothing. Palty smiled and put her hand on her cheek, “Oh my, ...”

Me too, Sensei. But I don't know much about machines~?”

“Dird, you're strong and will make a good helper. Besides, if I live here, you can stay on this ship

whenever you want. That way, you can play with Shou-kun all the time!”

“Yes! I'll help you; I'll help you; I'll help you!”

“Hey, don't be so quick to be tamed, you simpleton!”

Alea lightly slapped Dird's head as she got into the groove, but Dird still smiled happily and said, “Ehehehe.” Alea said, “You're such an idiot, ...”

“Hmmm. Now that that's settled, I'm going to go arrange for the lifeline to be installed!”

Miron then took out a small folding bike from inside the boat and rode off towards the port village on it.

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An hour later, Miron returned with Minamida, Tomi, and a few old men who looked like craftsmen. It was already dark outside, and the ship was illuminated from below by the powerful lights that Miron carried.

“Hey guys. I thought I heard a loud noise, but I guess that's what ... ... happened.” Saying this, Minamida seemed to be calmly analyzing the unusual situation of the cruiser being boarded up and thinking about how the construction should be done.

“Minamida-san, what do you think? Is it impossible to put this ship back in the sea and use it anymore?”

When Shou asked, Minamida said, “Hmm,” and paused for a moment... “Well, from what I can see, there's a pretty big crack in the bottom of the ship... ... If we could at least float it, we could tow it away, but... ... I guess I'll have to load it onto a large ship and take it with me... ... But there are only a few places near the island where you can park a boat that can carry this thing. It's also a hell of a lot of work to get it there.”

“So that's... ...”

“Yeah. Even if we were to repair it, it would take quite a bit of time, and as Miss Miron said, it would be more efficient to build a new one. She already seemed like she was ready to live here in the first place... ... I think it's going to be hard to convince her. What do you think?”

“I guess so.”

“That's impossible.”

“Give up.”

“Oh, no... ...” Shou cringed. He had hoped that if he could get the ship out of the way, he could get Miron to stop living here, but it looks like things weren't going the way he wanted them to.

“Kukoma-kun, I know exactly how you feel ～～～～!”

“Minamida-san... ...?”

Pon, Minamida put a hand on Shou's shoulder and nodded yes. “I know exactly what you mean, because I've been there myself. But you know, the key to these things is to give up. Don't worry, I'm sure you'll be able to overcome these difficulties... ...!”

“Minamida-san... ...!”

For some reason, Minamida was a little excited and Shou was a little touched. He felt as if Minamida, a man himself, really understood his feelings.

But then.

“Oh, Minamida-san, you're forcing Sensei on Shou!”

Dird pointed out happily, and Minamida shuddered slightly as if he'd been hit with a simple “ouch”.

“What? Minamida-san... ...? No! That's terrible!”

“I'm sorry, Kukoma-kun! But I'm already married, so I can't! I'm sorry about that, but my wives have been telling me not to take on anymore! I can't deal with Miss Miron!”

“What? No more? Wives' .....?”

“Oh... Ah, ah, um! My wife and her family have told me not to add any more trouble! Hahaha. But you seem to be a good venting tool, and Miss Miron has been quiet the past few days.”

Shou didn't really question the fact that Minamida was acting like he was covering something up, he was more interested in doing something about the current situation.

“Haha ... ... Anyway, I hope she gets a new ship soon.”

“What? Shou-kun doesn't want to live with me?”

“Oh, Miron-sensei!”

Miron, who had been talking to the old craftsmen, came over to Shou and the others as Shou breathed out a sigh of frustration. It seemed that they had been unlucky enough to hear his voice.

“Hey Minamida, did you hear that? Shou-kun said we should get out of here as soon as possible. I don't know where I'm going. So how about we go live together at Minamida's house?”

“Okay, then I'll go live with Shou-kun.”

“Why would you do that? Why don't you just enjoy your adult life with me?

“Of course not! I love my wife... I love my wife!”

Miron and Minamida fussed, and as Shou was left behind, Dird and the others said distantly.

“As usual, Sensei is like a typhoon, isn't she?”

“The storm area is small, though.”

“That said, the damage is enormous... ... and the course is changing rapidly... ...” Alea and Apuesta took advantage of Dird's typhoon comment, and only Palty chuckled.

“Huh, Miss Miron, I don't think we have time for this. Well then, everyone, it's time for you to explain the plan.”

Minamida said with a tired look on his face, to which the old craftsmen replied with a laugh.

“What, no more melodrama?”

“It's a shame for a man not to eat, isn't it Minamida? Or shall we continue next time?”

“Wha-ha! That's a good draw!” Minamida muttered weakly as he lowered his shoulders, “There will never be a next time... ...”

Tomi, with a stern face, spoke up. “Hey, hey, hey, old guys! Don't play with me and get on with estimating the plan!”

“Yes, yes, yes, yes... although it's hard to do in the dark.”

After that, Miron finished the estimate of the renovation plan with two words, so it was finished quickly. After that, Miron and the old craftsmen started drinking, but Shou and his friends couldn't keep up with them, so they played with Pī and Piyo and then went to sleep.

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The next day, when Shou and his friends came back from school.

There were many small cranes and trucks in front of the beach and jungle, bringing in wood. Tomi and the old craftsmen from last night were there, but there were many other craftsmen as well. Apparently, all hands were mobilized to complete the work.

“Oh, welcome back, guys. All the troublesome pile-driving has been done today, so all we have to do is to build it according to the blueprint. Let's get to work, old men!”

“Heh, heh, heh.” “Okay, okay.” “Okay.”

“Okay.” “Okay.” “Okay.” “Okay.” “Will you check it over, Miron-sensei? If you're okay with this, we'll go ahead with it.”

“Hmm. Let me see. Yes, that's it! I'll take care of the rest!”

With Miron's final approval, the work proceeded at a rapid pace.

As he looked up at the craftsmen working one after another, Shou murmured. “It's amazing, isn't it? I can't believe they were able to do so much processing just yesterday.”

Miron, standing proudly next to Shou, said. “Once you have the data, wood processing can be done easily with machines. Besides, this kind of data is stored. All you have to do is change the size and other values and you're good to go.”

“I see. I wonder if you could quickly build my house as well.”

“The cruiser is used for the foundation, so it's impossible to build a house this quickly.”

“Huh... ... I knew it... ...”

“Huh, don't be so downhearted. I've prepared a small present for you as a greeting to your new neighbors, so look forward to it, Shou-kun.”

“What? A present? Is it for me? That's...”

“It's a secret! Come on, if you're not too busy, why don't you go help your grandfathers!”

“Whoa! Okay, okay!”

“You guys too! You ate all my meat the other day, so you should work for it!”

“Yes, sir!” “Seriously?” “It can't be helped.” “Hmm, let's all work hard.”

Miron rushed Shou, Dird and the others to help with the unfamiliar carpentry work.

And two days later... Just as the sun was rising, the renovation work was finished.

A large terrace. An observatory with a spectacular view. Miron's cruiser has now been transformed into a villa. It was a dramatic before and after.

“Hmmm. That's pretty good work, you guys did a great job!”

“Yeah, it's pretty spectacular.” “Good job.”

Tomi and the rest of the old craftsmen gave Shou and the others a pat on the back, and Shou laughed, feeling refreshed with a big bead of sweat on his forehead.

“Wow, looking at it again, it's amazing! I feel like I've built a huge plastic model.”

“Yeah, you're right! It's amazing! We worked so hard on it!”

Dird agreed with Shou's opinion, and Shou and the others spent some time talking over the sandwiches that Tomi had prepared for lunch.

“No, it's really good for a fast grower. I want one.”

“Yeah. I'm a little jealous.”

“Well, cruiser life is quite fashionable, isn't it?”

Alea, Apuesta, Palty and the others continued to eat while looking up at the ship, Shou said a little tiredly after hearing those words.

“Ahhh, I'm living in a humble tent right next to such a gorgeous house.”

“Oh no. There are two beds, so you can use them whenever you want, right Shou-kun?”

“Yes! Living in a tent isn't so bad either!”

“Shit! You're such a boring boy.”

Shou was beginning to understand how to treat Miron.

“Oh. Hey, hey, Sensei. It looks like there's still some wood left over over there. Are you going to throw that away?”

Dird pointed to the lumber yard, and sure enough, there was still some lumber there. With everyone's attention, Miron said.

“It would be a shame to throw it away. I'm planning on making a few things with that stuff. Well, let's just do that after we're done eating.”

After that. The remaining wood was used to build a private toilet.

In the shade of a large rocky outcrop jutting out from the shore, the stakes had been driven in the day before, and with relatively simple assembly and nailing, it was ready in no time at all.

“How's it going, Shou-kun? Here's a housewarming greeting - a present for you!”

“Oh, oh, oh!”

Needless to say, it was Shou who was most impressed with the toilet. Until now, Shou had felt the most pain in doing his business. When he could afford it, he would ride the bike Minamida had given him to the island's administration building to use the restroom, but it was hard to pedal a bike in an emergency.

“This wood is impregnated with a special resin, so if you take good care of it, it will last a very long time. And then...”

Miron explained as she pushed the small pump on the side of the toilet bowl. Then water came gushing out from under the toilet bowl. It seemed to be drawing fresh water from a spring or something.

“Oh, oh, oh, even the washlet is... ...!” Shou almost wept at the wonder of a civilization he had almost forgotten, and Miron laughed proudly.

“But if it's outdoors, won't it be a problem if there's a storm or something?”

Alea blurted out a question.” Dird agreed, and Apuesta and Palty nodded, “Yeah, I guess so.”

“In that case, you should use the bathroom in my cruiser. Oh, and Shou-kun, you can use my bathroom on a regular basis, okay? And while you're at it, you can also use my bath, which is soaked in a lot of my extracts...”

“Wow, this is really great... I really like this toilet... I'm going to use this toilet even on a stormy day!”

“Shit!”

Miron looked dissatisfied with the way her story was being passed off, but Dird and the others seemed to have changed their opinion of Shou, saying, “You've grown up... ...

“Oh, but that's it. Palty can't use this bathroom because it's too small. You'll get scared if you're all alone. If you want, you can use it with me.”

“Oh, Alea, you still say that? ... ... I won't forgive you!”

“Ugh! You don't have to be so angry just because you're in front of Shou! I'm sorry!”

“Alea... ..., you never learn.”

Alea repeated the same thing despite the fact that she had slipped up about Palty's weaknesses before, leaving Shou dumbfounded and Apuesta with a small sigh.

In the midst of the noisy but friendly mood, Shou yawned in exhaustion and said, “Wow... ... As expected, I've been a bit tired for the past few days... ... But I'm glad the construction is over sooner than I thought.”

“That's right~! It's because we all worked so hard! Sensei! We did our best, and we want some kind of reward!”

Dird, who still seemed to be in good health, raised her hand and said so, and Miron, who had been lying down to rest, got up and said, “Hmm? If you're looking for a reward, why don't we go on a picnic tomorrow to celebrate the completion of the project? It's been exactly one week since Shou-kun came here, right? We're going to celebrate that as well.”

“A picnic? I mean, it's already been a week since I came here?” Shou was amazed at how fast time flew, and the mention of a week reminded him that tomorrow was the day he was supposed to meet Minamida. Shou had been so busy since arriving on the island that he had completely forgotten about the appointment.

At Miron's suggestion, Dird and the others' faces brightened up.

“Wow! That sounds great! I want to go on a picnic! Yes, yes, I agree! Let's all go together~!”

“Haha. It's not much different from a picnic now, though.”

“Maybe we could go to... ... and go to the cove on that little island over there, since I don't think Shou has been there yet.”

“Oh Apuesta, that's a nice idea. Let's go to that cove tomorrow with lots of lunch. Is everyone good?”

“Yes, yes! Great~! It's so nice to swim there! Oh, of course, Pī and Piyo will be with us, so don't worry~!”

“Piyo?” “PiyoPiyo!”

Dird was excited, Alea and the others were all happy and cheerful, and the strange tension from earlier had completely disappeared.

“Oh, that cove. There are some dangerous places there because of the fast current. Well, it's okay if I'm with you. I need a bathing suit! Come on, Shou-kun. About my bathing suit...”

“Please get me a decent one!”

“Excuse me! I only have a decent Brazilian swimsuit and a decent school swimsuit!”

“Neither of them is decent, you know! They're both forbidden, forbidden!”

“I see. So, you want me to be completely naked? You're so bold. But if Shou-kun says it's okay, then... ... muh-huh-huh.”

“Damn it ... ..., this girl ... ... needs to do something ... ... fast!”

Shou was frustrated with the happy Miron, and the three of them, except Dird, looked dumbfounded.

“Hey Miron, Shou's going to faint again, and if you don't have a proper bathing suit, then the picnic will be without Miron.”

“! Alea, you're going to ostracize the one who started it all!”

“Why don't you just get a decent one?”

“Stick with... ...! OK, I'm sorry Shou-kun can't move if he has a tent on his lower body.

“Uh, ... You can find them at Tomi's store.”

“OK, let's go to ....”

As Miron started the engine of her small motorcycle, Shou called out to her.

“— Ah! Mi, Miron-sensei, please wait a minute!”

“What? What is it Shou-kun?”

Miron turned and stopped, and Dird and the others tilted their heads, “?” He nodded his head.

(Yes! We're all here, and now would be the best time to talk!) Shou called out to everyone, “Wait a minute! Then, he went into his tent and carrying a number of bags that he had prepared a few days ago, he went outside.

“? Shou~? What's that~?”

“Yeah, actually...” Shou handed one of the bags to Dird, who was closest to him, and Dird looked down at the bag in her hand with a twinkle in her eye.

Shou handed one to Alea, Apuesta, and Palty. Finally, he gave one to Miron as well.

“Shou? What the hell is this?”

“.....Shou?”

“Shou... What is this?”

“Shou-kun?”

All the female members curiously called Shou's name. After handing each of them a gift, Shou coughed deliberately and said, “Ahem. Well, let's see. That's ... ..., well, it's a present from me to all of you!”

“Huh?”

Shou said, somewhat embarrassed. “You see, Dird and the others wanted swimsuits from Tomi's store before, right? I've been indebted to everyone since I came to this island. So, I thought I'd give you something in return, and Tomi told me that a gift would be good. So, I negotiated with Tomi, and she gave me a discount on a gift that I would buy for everyone. I was wondering when to give it to her, but I thought it would be a good idea to use it tomorrow.”

“.....” Dird and the others remained silent.

“Oh, what's that? I mean, yo, did I do something unnecessary? If so, I'm sorry!” Shou couldn't help but apologize, but...

“～～～～! Wow! Thank you, Shou～～～～!”

“Whoa! Wait, Dird!

Dird jumped up and down and hugged him, and Shou couldn't catch her, so he fell down with her and landed on his butt on the beach.

“... ... Damn it, Shou, don't surprise me like this out of the blue. I'm not sure what to say. I'm sorry I called you unworthy before. Also, thank you for the ... ...”

“Alea... ...”

Alea averted her gaze unusually, her cheeks blushing in embarrassment.

“Shou... ... money from your part-time job, did you use it for this?”

“Huh? Ah, um, yes, thanks to Apuesta introducing me to a part-time job, I was able to buy enough for everyone. Thank you.”

“... ... That's our line. Thanks, Shou.” Apuesta gives a small - but warm - smile as she gently held the bag to her chest.

“Shou, thank you so much for such a ... ... gift, even for me. I will treasure it.”

“Uh-huh. Oh, Tomi-san made sure to find something that fits everyone! I don't think you'll have to worry about sizing! I hope you like the design too... ...” Shou said hurriedly, and everyone's eyes darted around, including Palty's.

“... ... Huh... Shou... I don't think you really needed to say that.”

“Huh?”

“I knew that's what you meant. But in a situation like this, you should have said something like,

“I picked out something that looks good on you guys myself!” You should've said something like that. Damn, Shou.”

“Oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!”

“But it's honest and kind of Shou-like.”

“Haha! I'm happy about anything! Thank you, Shou!”

Palty and Apuesta were giggling, Alea was giggling but satisfied, and Dird was jumping up and down with joy.

And finally. Miron, who had been silent for a long time, finally said.

“Shou-kun ... ... for me too ... ...?”

“Ah, yes. I'm indebted to my teacher, and there's only so much I can do, so ... ... Haha. But this way, you don't have to wear a Brazilian swimsuit or a school swimsuit!”

“.....” Miron remained silent and stared at Shou with eyes as if she was looking at something unbelievable.

Then—only a moment later, a beautiful smile appeared on her face.

“Ah...” A small voice leaked out of Shou's mouth. The smile was different from any expression Miron had ever shown before, it was simply beautiful and gorgeous, and he couldn't help but be mesmerized by it.

However, Miron soon returned to her usual grin and suspicious expression...

“I'll wear the swimsuit of your choice, and I'll dye it your color. You'll be able to see me in my swimsuit tomorrow. Isn't that great? If I had a camera, I would have you take a picture of me!”

“Oh, no! What are you talking about? Oh, my God! Please don't come near me!”

Dird and the others laughed in unison at such a scene as usual.

This is how Shou and the others decided on their picnic plans, and after some discussion, it was decided that the swimsuits that Shou gave to the girls would be for fun on the day.

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“Picnic, huh?” A girl was staring at Shou and the others, hiding in the trees of the forest again today. “Then ... ... I have to get my swimsuit, too, right... ...? Ehehehe ... ...” The girl looked down at her own slender body and mumbled to herself.

She seemed to be happily excited about her new swimsuit for a while, but her expression soon

changed to one of anxiety. “But, but, no matter how much work I do, if I ask you for a swimsuit, ... will you be angry with me? I'm sure you'll be pissed... ...” The girl pouted and was depressed. That voice never reached Shou and others.

But...

“..... huh.”

She sighed, as if she didn’t notice that Miron was staring at the place where she was hiding with a mysterious smile on her face.

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The next day, Shou and the others woke up just as the sun was rising and set off.

It was only a few minutes to the cove, where Miron moved the fishing boat she had borrowed (by force) from Minamida, through the morning sea to arrive at a remote islet, one of the Banjō Islands.

“Wow!” Shou breathed in admiration on deck.

The ship slowly made its way through the small cave that was the entrance to the cove and headed straight for the beach.

“Amazing .....”

What greeted Shou and the others was a picturesque scenic spot that defied description.

The impressive giant trees growing on the cliffs at the back, the sparkling white sandy beach, the strong waves outside the cove in some places, but inside the cove, there were no waves, the water was calm and clear, and the morning sun shining through the rocky edges was fantastically beautiful.

“I've only seen something like this on ... ... television.”

“Ehehe~. Isn't it amazing? Shou! This is Minamida-san's private beach. So, there's no one else here, and it's really open!”

Dird leaned out of the boat with her arms outstretched in joy. “Watch out,” Apuesta supported her, while Alea and Palty laughed at Dird's excitement.

The fishing boat arrived at a natural wharf. They all secured the boat.

“Here, here, Shou-kun, you carry this to the beach. The girls are getting ready!”

Miron pointed to the luggage out on the deck and disappeared straight into the cabin with Dird and the others. Shou was convinced that she had gone to change her clothes.

“Well, that's what men do, isn't it?”

After unloading Pī and Piyo's incubator, a large cooler box, and bags onto the beach, Shou stretched as he peered into the crystal-clear water.

“Hmm ... ... haha ～～～～! No matter how many times I see it, it's still amazing. I wonder if this is really Japan.” Shou took a deep breath as he looked around, the clean air filling his lungs.

Just then, a voice called out from behind him.

“Hey, hey, Shou~!”

“Hmm? Dird? Are you already ready to...?”

He turned around. Shou was at a loss for words.

“.....”

Standing in front of Shou were five women. They looked so stunning that it was impossible for a Japanese man to look at them. They overwhelmed, moved and silenced everyone who saw them. For a moment, Shou felt as if he were a character in a movie, combined with the beautiful scenery.

“Shou? Hey, hey, what do you think? This is the swimsuit Shou gave me as a gift! Does it look good on me?” Dird peeked innocently at Shou's face from below. She was wearing a chocolate-colored swimsuit with a white flower pattern on the top and bottom, which looked a bit daring to Shou, but it was really healthy and very Dird-like.

“Wow. I've never worn a swimsuit like this before. I feel uncomfortable.”

“Alea, it looks good on you.”

“Hmm. You look good too, Apuesta.”

Alea, Apuesta, and Palty also emerged from the ship.

Alea was wearing a cute black and pink swimsuit with a frilly bottom that made her look a bit childish, but it also looked great against her white skin, connecting her to a different charm than Dird and the others.

Apuesta was wearing a white bikini in a subdued color with a cute bow tied around her chest, and when Shou looked at her, she blushed, indicating that she was brave enough to wear it.

Palty boldly wore a pale pink girly bikini that showed off her feminine daintiness while her ample bosom showed off her innocent sex appeal. And because of her crouched posture, her cleavage was clearly visible, catching the gaze of the surprised Shou.

They all looked better than Shou had judged them to, and Shou forgot to speak for a while.

“..... beautiful.”

And then, in a voice so low that no one could hear him, he unintentionally let out those words. It was a line that he should have been embarrassed to say, but it came out smoothly.

“Hey, Shou-kun? Don't just look at those little girls, look at me too!”

“Whoa!

Miron was the last one to appear.

He had given her an adult purple bathing suit, but the fabric area was much less than he had expected, and it was very embarrassing. Shou thought he shouldn't look at it, but Miron's body was as good as it could be, and she had an overwhelmingly seductive charm of an adult woman that was different from the other four. As if she was attracted to him, Shou couldn't look away.

Perhaps satisfied with Shou's appearance, Miron said with a winning smile.

“Hmph. Shou-kun. You're a naughty boy, giving such a microscopic, thin-stringed swimsuit to me, who has a dynamite body. Hmm. How about it? Are you satisfied?”

Shou looked away from Miron, who was twisting her body and giving him a look.

“No, no, no, no, no! I didn't think you were that small! Um, I'm sorry if the size doesn't seem right!”

“No need to apologize, okay? I'm very happy with it. I'm very happy.”

“Mmm! Shou~! Look at me too!”

Dird tugged on Shou's hand, looking a little grumpy, as if she thought they'd lost to Miron. Dird's surprisingly ample bosom popped against Shou's arm, and Shou couldn't help but yell out, “Oh my!”

“Well, I've already confirmed that Shou likes big tits when we saw what was in his cardboard box on the first day and at the end of the last job.”

“Shou... is still naughty... rather erotic.”

“Shou, I'm not sure if being too blatantly delirious about the opposite sex is a good impression.”

“Whoa! I'm sorry, I'm sorry!”

Alea and the others looked just as flustered as Dird, and Shou hurried to make up for it.

“Yeah, yeah, yeah, you guys look really beautiful! I'm glad it looks good on you!” It was a situation that could have been taken as flattery, but it was Shou's honest feeling.

Dird was the first to smile, and Alea, Apuesta and Palty also smiled softly.

“Well, now that Shou-kun's annoyance is over, come on, you have a whole day to play!”

“Oh!”

Miron shouted, and Shou raised his hand a little later, “Oh!”

It was obvious to everyone that not only Shou, who had grown up on the mainland, but also Dird and the others had all opened their hearts to this wonderful scenery.

But then Dird noticed something. “Oh... Speaking of which, where's Shou's swimsuit? Is it just for us?”

“Eh? Ah, yes. There weren’t many men's swimsuits, and besides, I had the one I wore at my old school, so I thought this would be fine.” Shou was now wearing his swimsuit. It was a little old, but still usable, and Shou wasn't really interested in his own swimsuit. Besides, he couldn't afford to buy one for himself in the first place.

“No! No! You can't do that, Shou-kun!”

“What?”

At the sound of Miron's loud voice, Shou and the others all looked at each other, and Miron smiled, as if she was planning something, and stuck her hand into a beach bag on the beach.

“Thank you. I've prepared ... ... for something like this!”

And Miron proudly took up the item.

It was an impossible men's bathing suit that would only suit a small number of men, with a mysterious design of a silvery color and a single purple rose blooming in the middle.

“Why?” Dird and the others began to groan.

“Why would such a dangerous thing be on .....? Oh! Oh, I get it! That's a gift for

Minamida-san, isn't it? Oh, so that's what it is!”

“Huhuhu... huhu.”

“Hey, what is it Sensei..., what is that laugh..., no way……!”

“Fffffffffffff ……fffffffffffffffff ……!”

“No, please don't ... ... come close to me!” Shou felt a shiver run down his spine at the frightening prospect of Miron's approach.

“You guys...? Wouldn't you like to see Shou in this sexy swimsuit?”

“Wait, what are you talking about, Sensei? It can't be...” Shou turned around to ask for help.

Dird seemed to be thinking, “Hmmm,” Alea was smirking, Apuesta was blushing and looking down, Palty was smiling and looking away, but...

“Yeah!” “I'd love to see that!” “I'd like to see ……, maybe.” “I think he'd look great in it.”

Yes, they all affirmed.

“Hey, hey, hey! What's wrong with you guys? I'll turn into a pervert if I wear this!”

“Come on, Shou-kun, this is the result of a majority vote. It's an absolute rule created by the democratic society of Japan. You've got to wear it! This is a top priority raw order!”

“What's that order? No, no, no! ～～～～! It's only for tanned, dark-skinned, stocky guys with inverted triangles! I'm sure you'll be happy to know that I'm not the only one who has a problem with this.

“Don't worry, I've chosen this swimsuit after much deliberation. You can help me make Shou-kun a man.” Miron smiled, and even Dird and the others gave a small nod...

“... ... What? What? You're kidding, right? Eh?” It had to be a joke. Before he knew it, Shou was surrounded by the girls. There was no more ... ... chance to escape. “Ah, aaahhh.”

“I'll take a picture of you to commemorate the occasion ... ... and if you want, you can upload it to my blog and broadcast it to the whole world ... ...”

“No, no ... ... no, no ... ...! I don't want it to stay on the internet forever!”

“Don't worry about ... ... I'll take it off for you gently ... ... ugh!”

“Ugh, oh my god ～～～～! Da, someone help me ～～～～!”

“PiyoPiyo! PiyoPiyo! PiyoPiyo! Piyo!”

Like a nameless mob character being attacked by a monster in a horror/suspense movie, Shou was humiliated for the rest of his life as he listened to the voices of the chicks.

This little island was a veritable treasure trove of playgrounds.

There was more than just swimming and enjoying the scenery. From the giant trees, there were simple suspension bridges to move from one place to another. From the giant rocks you could jump into the sea, making it like an athletic field. Also, at the place where the rocks formed a tunnel, the sunlight reflected on the white sandy beach, which in turn reflected on the sea, making the cave itself glow blue. No matter where you look, you would never get bored.

There were facilities for lodging, kitchen facilities, toilets, and a terrace with a great view, all built by digging into the cliff or using huge trees. It was a heavenly place that kept Shou and his friends' hearts constantly racing.

“—Puha! Haha! I haven't done something like this since I was in elementary school!”

“I'm next! I'm coming! Eeee!

“Whoa! Watch out, Dird! I'm still... oh no!

Boom! Shou's face was soaked from the effect, and he coughed.

“—Puh-uh. Hahahaha! This is fun Shou~!”

Dird peeked out from the surface of the water and laughed, and Shou couldn't get angry at that smile, and Alea and the others who were waiting on the cliff couldn't help but laugh as well.

“Come on, you guys! You can jump in and play, but be careful not to go outside the cove, where the waves are swirling wildly! I don't think you guys need to worry about that, though.”

“OK!”

Miron shouted, sitting alone on a beach chair, Dird was the first to answer, raising her hand, Alea said, “Yes, yes,” Apuesta nodded silently, and Palty said, “Okay.” It had been a really fun time.

After playing around like that, everyone took a lunch break. Laying a blue sheet on the beach, they enjoyed a delicious sandwich of pork and lettuce that they had prepared the day before. Then it was right back to playing again...

“Miron-sensei~! Would you like to play with us, Sensei?”

“Hmph, Shou-kun? Do you think I'm on the same level as you children? I'll just stay here and relax. Go make some noise in that nice swimsuit, young man!”

“Ugh. I finally forgot about the swimsuit.”

Shou tried to call out in good faith but was kicked out. As he left the scene, looking down at his swimsuit, which was still embarrassing, the girls by his side chuckled.

“? What's wrong with everyone?”

Shou questioned, and Dird mumbled in a small voice, “You know.”

“That bathing suit, Miron-sensei picked it out for you last night.”

“Huh?”

Shou remembered that Miron had said earlier that she had chosen this swimsuit after much deliberation.

Alea and the others added to Dird's words. “You see, we went back to the house yesterday, right? You know how hard it was for us to go out with you?”

“I was also asked to find out how to import men's swimwear from ... ... But Tomi-san's store was the only one on the island, so I went to ... ...”

“So, we all went to Tomi's store. Naturally, the store was closed, but Miron-sensei managed to force the store to open for us. Phew. After that, it was just like Dird said.”

“So ... ... was it ... ...?”

“Yeah, yeah. I was really serious about my choice, Sensei!”

“Yeah, I've never seen Miron's face like that before.”

“Miron-sensei is so clumsy. But I'm sure she really is thinking about Shou.”

“Yes, you're right. Sensei, she was serious, but she looked really happy ... ... as she picked out your swimsuit. Huh, she was as excited as an adolescent.”

“Miron-sensei was ... ...?” Shou was taken aback. The rose swimsuit he was looking down at still didn't seem to suit him.

Still, Shou found this swimsuit very endearing. After all, he had never received a gift from anyone other than his parents before. Himeko and the others had always given her gifts, but he had never received anything in return. That's why even a swimsuit like this seems very important to Shou.

Indeed, Miron was a mess, a beautiful woman with a dirty old-man side, but sometimes she showed a girlish side, and Shou began to feel a strange attraction to Miron. (That's why, I think. I'll have to thank her later.)

“Hey you guys ... ...? What were we just talking about?”

“Oh!” “Geez!” “Oh no!” “Oh no!”

“That's the reaction of ... ... you guys! I'm sure you didn't tell him... I'm sorry. I've already reminded you that this is a secret!

“Whoa, whoa! Run! Oh, no! We're in trouble.”

Dird and the others ran away as if they were spiders, and Miron swore, “Damn those kids!”

“Um, sir.”

“What is it, Shou-kun? Just so you know, I'm a pretty loyal person...!”

“Thank you very much for this. I'll be sure to wear it carefully.”

“.....!”

Shou was able to clearly express his heartfelt gratitude. Shou's cheeks seemed to be reddening slightly. .....

“It's a natural response for an adult. I'm sure you're not the only one. Here, here, go play with Dird and the others if you understand!”

“... ... Yes! I'm off!” Turning his back on Miron, Shou ran off with his glittering swimsuit to the giggling girls.

After that, Shou and the girls continued to frolic around like little children.

“Haha, Dird, over here!”

“Hey wait, Shou~! Whoa! This bridge is wobbly~!”

A few minutes earlier, Dird said, “I want to play nature tag!” Her spur-of-the-moment suggestion had led Shou and the others to organize a game of tag using the entire area around here. At first, Alea said, “I don't want to do it, it's too tiring,” but once it started, she was very excited.

“Shou, you seem to have gotten used to it.

“Hmm, you're right, I'm often outrun by you guys.”

“Gu, guh ... ... you guys ... ... really, how much physical strength do you have ... ... you play too much ... ...!”

Currently it, Dird, was chasing after Shou, while Alea and the others ran a little further away to watch, Alea was already getting lightheaded and groggy.

“Damn it, I'm the only one they're after! You'll never catch me!”

“Wait~ Shou～～～～! Whoa! I'm scared of this scaffolding!

Remembering that he used to like playing with athletic things when he was a child, Shou managed to keep running from Dird. And now he was running on a long and narrow suspension bridge between the cliffs, looking directly down to the sea. The bridge was old and unsteady, and Dird was struggling to keep her balance. Shou, on the other hand, was carefully but quickly crossing the bridge and would soon reach the other side.

“Okay! We'll just run to Alea and the others on the other side...”

And then, just like that.

Snap!

“..... Eh?”

The weight of Shou was too much for the bridge to bear. The thin wooden planks that formed the bridge were decayed and easily broken, and by then Shou was already surrounded by a strong sense of floating.

As the scenery turned upside down and he heard the sound of the wind, Shou realized that the bridge was broken and that he was in the middle of nowhere.

The bridge was broken - and he was falling off the bridge.

“!!! Shouuuuuuuuuu!!!”

With Dird's voice still in his ears, Shou plunged headfirst into the sea and received a severe shock.

“—! What? Gurgle, gurgle!!!?”

Bogo bogo bogo. The sudden drop and impact caused him to swallow the seawater in an attempt to breathe. He opened his eyes, but couldn't see up and down, and couldn't move.

(.....! Oh, by the way, Dr. Miron said the current is fast around here!) Shou remembered what Miron had said several times. Because this place was near an intricate rocky coast, the waves crashed into each other and gained momentum.

As soon as he realized this, he began to feel distressed and dazed. The waves reflected off the cliffs tossed Shou around with erratic movements, and he was completely played.

“Guh ..... cough.....!” (Oh no, not again, my breath is .....!)

His consciousness became hazy. Shou lost even the strength to struggle and sank straight to the bottom of the sea. (..... Damn it. Sorry, guys. .....)

If he died, Dird and the others would feel responsible, and Miron would be held accountable for his actions. Shou was filled with a sense of apology for this, rather than for himself. He was fed up with his own pettiness until the end.

That's how it was when Shou was prepared to even lose his own life.

(.....?) Slightly open eyelids-beyond his vision, he saw the figure of someone there.

The silhouette looking up at him from the sea, he did not know who it was. But he was certain that someone was coming to save him.

(... ... ... anyone?) He tried to look at the face of the person who had come so close to him, ... but before he could, Shou lost consciousness.

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Just before Shou fell off the bridge.

“Oh, my God. I made sure to keep the bathing suit thing a secret.” Miron was sitting alone in a beach chair, slurping down another bottle of sake. “Pfft. It's been a week since Shou-kun came to this island... ... Tonight will be 'that day' again.” Miron mumbled as she watched Shou and his friends playing in the distance.

“I wonder what kind of choice Shou-kun will make... ... There is a possibility that he will return to the mainland...” Then Miron realized. Lately, she had been spending more and more time thinking about Shou, rather than Minamida, whom she was supposed to be targeting.

“Well, that can't be helped, can it? I'm Shou's homeroom teacher. It's only natural for me to be concerned about Shou-kun.” Miron talked as if she was fooling herself, but she was smart enough to know how she felt when she mumbled something like that.

“No, you're not. You're an adult, remember? I'm a woman who graduated from the highest school in America at the age of twelve, and I'm more interested in Shou-kun, who is still a child, than Minamida, who is also an adult.”

It was a good thing that no one was watching, but Miron's face was definitely red from the effects of the alcohol.

That's when it happened.

“!!! Shouuuuuuuuuu!!!”

Dird's loud voice was heard.

“WHAT! Hey, what is it? Hey! You guys?” Miron put down the bottle and ran towards Shou and the others, it didn't take her long to understand the situation as she reached the teary eyed Dird and the other girls.

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Shou……Shou……Shou…… ！”

He could hear voices.

Was he asleep? In his blurred mind, he heard someone calling his name. At first, he thought he was hallucinating, but the voice became louder and louder, and then it seemed more and more real.

“Shou! Shou! Shou! Shou, wake up!”

“..... Ha!?”

Gasp!

“Whoa!” “Oh! Oh!” “What? What the...?”

He jerked up as hard as he could. He blinked several times. Each time, water dripped from his hair and eyelashes, blocking his vision. He roughly wiped the water from his face with his hands, and then coughed, his mouth overflowed with seawater. He had drunk quite a bit.

“... ... Huh? Me ... ...” After calming down, he looked around. It was a sandy beach somewhere. He looked around and saw that there was a cove nearby, and he could also see the bridge from which he had fallen.

And there were the five familiar figures - Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Palty, and Miron.

“Everyone .....”

The five of them were shocked and didn't say anything for a while.

But then...

“.....! Shou〜〜〜〜〜〜〜〜!!!!”

“Whoa!”

Dird hugged him first, and Shou, who had just woken up, fell down on the sand again.

“Oh my god, I'm so glad you're okay! I was wondering what I would have done if you had died Shou~!”

“Dird... ...”

Seeing her crying and distraught, Shou was able to think calmly. And then he knew. He knew that he had fallen off the bridge, drowned, and almost died.

“... ... haha 〜〜〜〜. What the heck is that face? Shou, do you have any idea how worried we were?”

“Oh, Alea... ...”

Alea's voice was unusually serious and angry, and Shou was confused.

“Shou... ... thank goodness... ... really... ...” Apuesta looked terribly relieved and slumped down on the spot, as if she had lost her back. There were tears in her eyes.

“Are you injured? Are you aware of anything? Shou!”

“Oh, uh, yeah. I'm fine, Palty.”

“Yes, I see... ... I'm really surprised... ... I'm glad you're okay, Shou... ...” Palty had been praying, and she smiled at him, keeping her hands together.

“Shou-kun! You know, if you die in an accident here, the blame will fall on me, right? I told you many times to be careful! Don't be a nuisance!” Finally, Miron yelled at Shou from the front in a loud voice.

Dird and the others all reacted to her words, with Dird in particular saying, “Sensei! That's not fair,” she said, and then stopped.

She had tears in the corners of her eyes, too.

“... ... Sensei.”

It was probably a cover for Miron's embarrassment, as she couldn't be honest even in this situation. In fact, Miron was feeling the same way as Dird and the others, despite her usual

arrogant attitude.

Shou got up with Dird in his arms, looked around at everyone again, and said, “I'm sorry for worrying you! But I'm fine!” He bowed his head in sincerity.

That took care of the situation. The weak-looking girls all smiled and wiped away their tears, even Miron seemed to have forgiven him, though she looked away with a “hmph.”

“Hey, Shou, are you sure you're okay? It looks like you hit your head pretty hard too.”

Dird asked to which Shou replied while holding his still slightly throbbing head.

“Yeah, I don't seem to be hurt anywhere. Just a little throbbing in my head, but I'm fine. Anyway, wasn’t it Dird who came to save me that time? She swam up to me like a mermaid, it was really mysterious.”

“What?” Dird said, tilting her head.

“Well, it wasn't me, was it?”

“... ... So Alea, Apuesta, Palty, or you, Sensei?”

“.....” Alea and the others all looked at each other and shook their heads in frustration.

“No, it wasn't us, okay? We just got here a few minutes ago.”

“Yes, we came to help Shou, but he was already lying here.”

“Yes. We rushed over as well, and Dird tried to give him artificial respiration, but we found that Shou was already breathing. So, we frantically called for help.”

“Yeah, yeah. And then Shou-kun woke up with a start. I was so surprised.”

“Oh?” Apparently, no one had any idea. Then who in the world could have saved him? (..... What do you mean?) He was sure that the silhouette at that moment was that of a woman. However, all the female members who came to the picnic had no recollection of it. Come to think of it, the swimsuit the woman was wearing didn't seem to belong to any of these people.

“..... Hmmm?” Maybe someone happened to be in this place, saw the scene of him drowning, and saved him? That was the only possibility that remained, but Shou had no way of knowing that fact. Even if he thought about it further, there was no way he could know.

“Mmm~? I don't know, but I'm glad Shou is okay!”

“What, you mean someone other than us saved Shou? Hahaha, then maybe a fairy tale mermaid really did show up.”

“I'd like to thank her if I could.”

“Hmm, I suppose you're right. If there is such a person, I'd love to do that for them, since they saved Shou's life.”

“I see... ... Yes, you're right. I'll have to thank you properly when I see you.” Having been saved, Shou once again felt the joy of being alive. Then he gently touched his own lips with his hand. For some reason, he felt a soft touch on his lips.

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Shou woke up, just as Dird and the others appeared.

“Haa... ... haa... ... haa... ...” In the shade of a large tree, a pretty girl was breathing heavily. She was dressed in a bathing suit, several drops of water dripping from the tips of her hair. She was soaking wet and breathing with her hands on her modest chest. She took several deep breaths and finally calmed down.

Then she stealthily pulled herself out from behind a tree and looked at Shou and the others.

“Thank God. It looks like you're safe and awake. I hope they didn't find out about me, too.”

(I wonder what I've gotten myself into. I don't think it was my role to go that far, and I'm sure I wasn't the kind of person who could move that aggressively in the first place. But my body moved on its own, and I found myself diving into the sea.)

“If you haven't been found out, ... you'll be fine, right?” The girl stopped peeking and hid behind a tree again.

“Even so, ... I, shh, shh, shh, shh, shh, shh, shh, shh?” She could still vividly recall the scene from earlier. When she saved Shou. She was so selfless at that time. In order to save Shou, who had stopped breathing, without thinking about the consequences...

“..... Ah, wow, wow, wow me!” The girl gently touched her lips and sat up, her face reddening.

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Except for Shou's accidental drowning, it was a great time. But the more fun they had, the more quickly it passed.

The reddish sun was shining on Shou and the others, and the sea was turning red. In the midst of this, Shou and the others were getting ready to leave.

“Haha~ That was so much fun!”

“I'm so tired... ... I haven't played outside this much in a while, whew.”

“Yeah. It was fun.”

“Yes, it was. It's great that we can all come together and play with nature.”

“You guys are really healthy... ... You're so young!”

The girls chatted about the events of the day. Miron hadn't played much, just sunbathed on a beach chair on the sand and drank, but she looked tired, probably because of Shou. At the sight of the girls, Shou smiled as well.

“Um, ... Shou had fun too?” Dird asked with a slightly apologetic look on her face, probably because of what had happened.

But Shou answered with a smile. “Yes, of course! It was a lot of fun. It's a memory I'll never forget!”

When he replied like that, Dird also puffed up and said with joy all over her face. “Haha! That's good to know! It'll be nice to come back!”

“Yes, it will. I hope we can all come together again!”

“... ... Yeah. We should all come together again!”

Dird looked a little sad at that point, and Shou had the slightest doubt in his mind. But he didn't think too much about it, thinking that it was probably just a sentimental feeling that the good time was over.

Miron also showed a complicated expression for a moment...

“Ok, ok, time to go home. Are you sure you didn't forget anything? If you forgot anything, you'll have to swim back!”

“That's absurd!”

Shou and the others all climbed aboard the ship, with Miron grumbling as they headed back to the ship.

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Miron took Shou back to the houseboat, and with Pī and Piyo's incubator in his hand, he went down to the beach that he had grown accustomed to.

Miron was going to take Dird and the others home as soon as she returned the fishing boat, so Shou spent the night by himself, which was unusual. After a quick meal of leftover dried fish, he washed himself with the water from the nearby spring and the containers that Tomi had given him. When he was refreshed, he lay down on the beach and gazed up at the night sky, which shone with an exquisite brilliance that would be hard to see in the city. The sound of the waves

was soothing to his ears that he felt as if he would fall asleep if he closed his eyes, but Shou's eyes were bright, as if he had not yet awakened from his excitement.

“—Okay, it's not yet nine o'clock, I guess I'm just in time for my appointment with Minamida-san.” Glancing at his watch, Shou turned his gaze back to the greater universe.

“I wonder if Dird and the others are already asleep.”

In the midst of all this, Shou's thoughts were solely about the girls. It was all he could think about these days.

It had only been a week since he had come to this island. If he had been alone, he would have run away from the island or cried out to Minamida for help. But thanks to them, Shou was able to live happily, and he owed a great debt of gratitude to Dird and the others.

“Haha. I've never been able to get along with girls like this before.” He thought honestly. He had never really talked to girls his own age before, except for Himeko. He was surprised that he was able to talk to them so easily. He could have gone out with Himeko like this and maybe the relationship would have been different, but he had faint hopes.

This is why he was concerned about it.

“But I ... ... still know almost nothing about Dird and her friends.” (I'm with them all the time, but I don't know anything about them in detail. What country they are from, what kind of family they have, what kind of house they live in, what kind of people they have met. And for what reason they came to this island?)

“... ... And...” He remembered the first night.

Even now, he could vividly recall the atmosphere of that time. That may have been a dream, but it was a very real scene. (I wonder if Dird and the others are hiding a huge secret from me. Maybe there's something hidden on this island.)

“Maybe I read too many manga. I haven't read manga in a while, though.” Shou convinced himself that it was time to go back to his tent.

Then he heard the sound of footsteps and turned around.

Episode 3: Paradise War

“Sorry, Kukoma-kun! I'm sorry I've been working so long again, and sorry to keep you waiting at ...”

“Oh, Minamida-san?”

It was Minamida who appeared, breathing lightly. Shou said, “No, I'm fine. Minamida thanked him, catching his breath as he said, “Thank you.”

“Anyway, Minamida-san, what exactly are we discussing today? Are we talking about my house or ... ... my school? Oh, maybe it's about my parents...”

“No, it's not about that... ... Actually, there's something I want you to see tonight.”

“Something you want me to see?”

“Yes. Well, since you've already started, I think it would be easier for you to understand if I tell you the rest of the story while you watch it.”

“? Minamida-san?”

“Kukoma-kun, I apologize in advance. I know you'll be a little surprised, but please try to stay calm.”

“Huh? What?” Shou couldn't understand what Minamida was saying at all, what the hell was he talking about and what was he going to show him, Shou was more worried than expectant.

“Okay, let's go. Everyone, just in case something goes wrong, please guard Kukoma-kun.”

“Got it.”

“—What?”

It wasn't Shou who replied. That's why Shou was nervous and astonished.

Yes, it was the Cabbits riding on his shoulders who replied to Minamida.

“What, what? Hey, Minamida-san! Now, here, the Cabbits are talking?!

“What? Oh, ... I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you first.”

“No, no, why? What? What?”

Minamida chuckled at Shou's panic, and the Cabbits chuckled.

“Since it's such a great opportunity, why don't you put more things into it?”

“You don't have to do any extra direction.”

Minamida said in an annoyed tone, but he was conversing with the Cabbits in a very natural way. “Yes, yes. Don't scare Shou too much,” said the other one happily.

“Sorry, Kukoma-kun, we'll talk about them later. Let's go then, guys.”

“Okay.”

At Minamida's signal, two Cabbits climbed onto Shou's shoulders and stretched out their ears. Then Minamida's body softly floated up, and to his surprise, Shou's body floated up as well.

“Whoa, whoa, whoa! I'm floating!”

“I'll leave it to these kids. Okay, Kukoma-kun, let's go.”

“What? Whoa!”

Before he could reply, Minamida and Shou were flying through the air like witches in a fairy tale - like psychics in a battle manga. Their speed was slow, but the vastness of the jungle below and the lights in the distance gave Shou a sense of the reality of flying.

“Oh, oh, I'm flying. I'm really flying!”

“Huh. Don't worry, Shou, we'll protect you.” One of the Cabbits riding on Shou's shoulder said, but Shou couldn't do anything but fidget.

After a while of flying through the night like this...

“I see them. Everyone, be careful approaching.”

“Got it,” the Cabbits said in unison.

Then Shou saw it.

“What ……? What …… that?”

Beyond the jungle. Near a mountain with no habitable zone. There, Shou's vision was greeted by ... ... several lines of fire. And then a vaguely humanoid energy body. And within the “inside” there was a human figure. Many energy bodies were fighting each other with swords or firearms in their hands. It was the same energy body that Dird had been wearing that night.

The scene looked like something out of a science fiction world, but it also looked like magic. Either way, it was an extremely alien sight, one that could never exist in the “world” Shou knew.

“Sen, so ……? What the hell is this ……? Shou shouted out loud.

This is because among the people fighting in the energy body, there were people that Shou knew. Yes, Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Palty, and the rest of his classmates. It was them.

“What the heck is this ......! Why are you all fighting .....?” It was then that Shou remembered the horrible memory that had been etched in his brain. (Yes, the ... ... of Dird and Alea that I saw before. That wasn't a dream after all!)

Reality confronted him. A reality that was hard to accept, but it was there. Shou's eyes forgot to blink and followed their figures. That's when it happened.

“Ah!”

What Shou saw was a scene where one of his classmates was under a dazzling barrage of fire. And the person conducting the attack was, to his surprise, Dird.

“Ah! Dird, what are you doing?”

“No, Kukoma-kun, they can't hear us from here.”

“Minamida-san ... ..., why, what's this?! Why are Dird and the others fighting? They're all my classmates at school! Why!”

“Yes, I'm sorry. It's no wonder you're still surprised ... ... I'll explain everything properly.” They remained in midair, and Minamida said with a mysterious look on his face. “Kukoma-kun, do you believe in the existence of aliens?”

“......What?” Shou was stunned by the unexpected words, but Minamida continued.

“I can understand why you're confused. But everything I'm going to tell you is the truth. Those kids ... ... your classmates, the girls, are not from this planet. They are from that huge universe, and they came to this Earth.”

“The ... ... universe, from ... ...?”

“Yes. And they're called pirates in the universe. Those pirates, those girls, are currently engaged in a “proxy war” for the whole of space...”

“War ... ...” Shou was no longer surprised, but rather quiet, while a Cabbit murmured to him.

“It's time.”

“Hmm, it's that time already. Okay.”

Nodding, Minamida pulled out a small terminal from his pocket and typed something into it. Then a high-pitched electronic sound came from the distance - from the fighting Dird - and at that moment, the girls stopped fighting all together. The energetic body that surrounded them disappeared like a phantom, becoming invisible. Apparently, Minamida had sent a signal to end

the fight or something.

“Well, ... Kukoma-kun, let's go back and talk about the rest when we get home.”

In response to Minamida's words, Shou could only shake his head slowly.

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“How are you doing, Kukoma-kun? Have you calmed down a bit?”

“Yes .....”

There, in front of Shou's tent, Shou and Minamida sat facing each other with the fire between them, warm steam coming from the mugs they held in their hands. The four Cabbits were also sitting near them, and Shou was sipping his tea and breathing quietly.

“I'll explain things to you little by little. If you don't understand, you can ask me questions as you go.”

“Yes ... ..., I understand.”

Minamida's eyes were serious. “As I said before, it's a proxy war, and the kids are all fighting for the space of their respective pirate guilds.”

“Pirate guilds?”

The Cabbit, riding on his right shoulder, added to Minamida's words. “Yeah. Those girls, they are all representatives of the countless pirate guilds that exist in the universe. And the battles they're waging right now are for the territorial rights that each guild will gain in the future.”

“That's how it is. You may not believe it right off the bat, but it's all true.”

“Well, even if you say it's true, ...” Shou was not convinced at all.

Space pirates? Why are they being represented by Dird and the others, who are children? Why are they fighting on an island like this? Shou didn't know anything about it.

“I understand your question, Kukoma-kun. But I don't know why they were chosen to be the representatives either. But I do know that the fate of each of them depends on whether they win or lose that battle.”

“Destiny ... What is it? That .....” Shou's only concern right now was the battle itself. And above all, he was only worried about the health of Dird and his classmates.

So Shou couldn't help but raise his voice. “No way ... ..., that's absolutely ridiculous! Dird and the others are good friends! Why should they fight ... ... and what if they die in the fight!”

“Calm down, Shou-kun.” One of the Cabbits said, placing a paw on Shou's cheek.

“Don't worry. They're not going to die unless something really - really bad happens. Look, remember what happened to ... ... Dird a week ago.”

“Dird? – Oh, by the way, Dird, her arm was ... ...”

The Cabbits and Minamida nodded. “Don't worry too much, though, because of the image of the word 'war'. This is a battle where there is little danger of death. Just think of it like a survival game on Earth.”

“S-Survival game .....?”

Although he had never actually played one, the analogy was easy to understand. It was true that survival games simulated war, but it was unlikely that anyone would die. That being said, he wasn't sure if this battle was any more powerful than that.

“Kukoma-kun, please don't misunderstand me. This is what we're doing, but it's only because we managed to bring a dangerous situation that could have turned into an all-out war into this. I think we might be at a level where we can say that this is the best we can do.”

“All-out war?”

“Yes, it is. And it's the girls themselves who chose this solution to avoid it. This is their decision, you know. That's what I want you to understand first.”

“Dird and the others chose ... ... themselves ... ...?”

“Yes. They have their own futures in mind. That's why this fight is taking place. But it's still not going to be won or lost yet.”

“Yeah, all of kids’ factions are in a state of antagonism, so there's no contest at all. It's a problem.” One of the Cabbits nodded and added that to Minamida's words, wagging both ears in an American-like reaction to the situation.

Then Minamida looked at his watch and said, “Well, it's pretty late today, and I'm sure Kukoma-kun won't be able to understand much more than what you've already said, so how about we talk about it in detail tomorrow?”

“What? Ah, yes, ... Um, I think it's fine.”

“I see. Well then, I guess we'd better get going.” Minamida got up, and the four Cabbits jumped to follow him. Finally, Minamida turned and said, “Kukoma-kun. I'm really sorry that I startled you tonight. However, knowing this doesn't change anything in your daily life yet. I hope you'll treat Dird and the others tomorrow as you always have.”

“.....”

“Well then, I'll see you tomorrow.” With those words, Minamida disappeared with the Cabbits.

Shou, who was left alone, remained ... ... silent for a while, and then muttered, “... This isn't really a dream, is it?”

“Piyo Piyo?” “Piyo!”

He could feel the pain from his cheeks, which he pinched himself, classically, and he could hear Pī and Piyo's voices clearly. But Shou still couldn't face this reality...

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The next day. Naturally, Shou had not slept well. No one came to pick him up that morning, so Shou went to school alone.

Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Palty, and the rest of his classmates were already in the classroom, but none of them were injured. They looked as cheerful as ever and showed no signs of having changed. This gave Shou a terrible feeling of discomfort. It was very hard to understand.

As soon as they arrived at the classroom, Dird and the girls left, leaving Shou behind. Maybe they had something to discuss.

When Shou was left alone, Mike called out to him. “Hey, good morning, Shou. I wanted to ask you what you thought of last night. I was pretty cool, wasn't I?”

“Mike... ...”

Mike looked the same, but he was also a participant in the war.

Shou revealed his honest feelings. “I'm not sure what you mean ... ... I'm still not sure ... ...”

“Hahaha. Well, I guess you're right.” Mike laughed at Shou's helplessness, and the smile on his face made Shou feel a little better.

“Didn't Minamida-san give you a brief overview? Would you mind if I gave you a little additional information?”

Mike could be trusted, Shou thought, and gave a slight nod.

Mike also nodded at Shou's reaction and continued. “Right now, there are twenty pirate guilds participating in this proxy war. And everyone in this class is a representative of their respective guild. Do you know that much about it?”

“Uh, yeah, Minamida-san told me about it.”

“I see. But even though they are called guilds, the number and size of the members of each guild are completely different. And if each guild were to fight an all-out war, it would be a gruesome battle that would involve non-combatants such as ordinary guild members, as well as many women and children. That's why we had to select our representatives for the battle like this.”

“Ah, … so that's how it is.”

Shou nodded, and Mike, perhaps amused by Shou's reaction, smiled and went on.

“Yeah, so originally there was a difference in strength between each guild. Based on that, the equipment used by each representative became different as well. Because, you know, there are some huge guilds that could have overwhelmed us with a full-scale battle. And yet, we ended up in a battle like this. At the very least, they should be given preferential treatment based on the difference in strength between the guilds, or at least their equipment.

“Umm, yeah. That's certainly ... ... true.” Shou understood; that's why the weapons the classmates were carrying last night were different from each other.

“In the first place, we wouldn't be able to fit on this island if we had to fight an all-out war. Besides, if we tried to fight with that many people the earthlings would know about our space civilization.”

“Oh yeah, ... yeah, that's it! Why do we need to do this on Earth in the first place?”

“Nice question, Shou.” Mike winked at him. “The reason, I guess, is that it's the home of a certain man who triggered the collapse of the space pirate existence... ... is a popular theory. Or because the first queen of the host nation of this war is from Earth. Well, there are many reasons. But I guess the most important reason is that it's hard to cheat.”

“Cheat?”

“Yes. Illegal modification of equipment, subterfuge, and the like. Earth is still a frontier planet in the eyes of the entire universe. Due to the treaty of the frontier planet, it's almost impossible to procure the latest equipment or infiltrate agents. The weapons we're using now are actually second hand from generations ago. In other words, it's like classic car racing.

“It's a classic car race... ...” At Mike's explanation, Shou noticed something that made him say. “Oh...! Then maybe it's Apuesta's ... ...!”

“Yeah, you're right. She's got a route for used equipment.”

That was a part-time job that Apuesta had asked him to do before. Shou had wondered about the firearms and other items that were being sold, but now for the first time it made sense. They were used in war, and they were real.

“That kind of connection is one of the quirks that makes a game exciting. Oh, and by the way, it's not just about the equipment. It's also the way war is fought.”

“What do you mean, ...?”

Mike continued, “The purpose of this game is to determine the order of distribution of space. That means you don't have to go it alone. Some of them are factions, for example, small guilds will have a much better chance of winning by teaming up with larger guilds, and they'll get more space than they would by themselves. It's a win-win situation.”

“Oh ... I see.”

“It's no use having superior equipment. But if that's the case, it's much more strategically advantageous to team up with two - or more - other guilds than one. And as a result of the consolidation, we've created four factions.”

“Four? Oh!” That rang a bell. And Shou realizes that the idea would be right. “Could it be the girls?”

“Yes, Dird Shank, Alea Balta, Apuesta Da Ruma, and Palty Jurai. These four people are the leader of the four guilds, each with their own name, and they're going into battle. But right now, these four factions are at odds with each other in terms of strength and manpower. The battle is at a standstill.”

“Speaking of which, Minamida-san also said something like that.”

“Yes. That's why you're the newcomer.”

“Me? I see. So, the reason why Dird and the others were so kind to a guy like me who came to the island for the first time wasn't just to make me feel at home, but also... ...” Shou was depressed at the thought of such a gloomy ... ... image. (I've been deceived my whole life.) He was about to feel that way, but...

“Haha. No, I don't think that has anything to do with it, Shou.”

“Huh?”

He looked up at Mike's nonchalant comment. He chuckled and said, “They couldn't stand to look at you, could they? You see, the girls were the same way. I think they wanted to help you, who was in the same situation as they were. In the first place, there was no way that the four of them were going to trick you, an Earthling who they knew nothing about and whose combat strength they didn't know. Besides...”

“... ... And?”

“No... I guess that's all I can say.”

“What? Wait, Mike?

“Look, the teacher's already here. I'll talk to you later!”

Mike ran back to his seat and Dird and the others came back to the classroom at the same time., but Shou couldn't talk to them, and they seemed to be somewhat reserved and didn't talk to Shou. .....

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“Yes, Shou-chan.”

“Thank you, ...”

“Can we play rock-paper-scissors today? I'd love to have my revenge! And hey, did your gift for Dird and the others go well? I'd love to hear about it.”

“... ... Sorry Tomi. I'm sorry about today.”

Shou received his lunch box and tea from Tomi, and when he finally emerged from the wave of lunch seekers, Dird, Alea, Apuesta, and Palty were waiting for him.

“Ah ... ...”

Shou said in a short voice, and Palty said as a representative.

“Shou, I believe you have questions for us?”

Shou was led by Dird and the others to a rest area at the edge of the schoolyard. It was the same place where they had eaten together before. The sound of the waves was soothing, along with the laughter of the students.

As they began to eat there, Dird and the others finally cut to the topic.

“Shou~. I'm sorry I couldn't pick you up today, okay? Minamida-san told me that you were watching our fight yesterday, and that's why we decided to go to ... ...”

“Well, we decided last night not to talk to Shou until lunchtime, when we could at least talk. I'm sorry, Shou.”

“Oh, is that so?”

“And I'm sorry, okay? I surprised you yesterday, didn't I?”

Shou swallowed the rice he had chewed at Dird's apology and replied. “Uh, yeah ..... But I guess what surprised me the most was ... ... that Dird and the others are still treating me the same as usual, like this?”

To be honest, Shou was feeling a little scared.

Dird and the others had been keeping the secret of the battle from Shou. And now that they had realized that fact, they were treating Shou no differently. Shou was confused because he didn't know what the girls were thinking. That's what he was afraid of.

However, his worries were soon resolved.

“What? Because we're friends.”

With that one word, Shou was convinced. It was because he could sense that Dird was telling the truth. She meant what she said, and there was no lie in it.

Alea continued, “Shou, don't get me wrong, but that fight is just a 'job', okay?”

“Sh, work .....?”

“Alea, that's too brief.”

Palty intervened and gave a follow-up explanation. “Shou, for example, you're playing some sport and you have a match against a student from another school, right? That's definitely an adversarial relationship, so to speak, but that doesn't mean it's not strange to form friendships and interact with students from other schools, right?”

“Yeah, that's true. But aren't sports and that fight totally different? Because you can actually be attacked and even physically damaged—”

“But you'll heal quickly, right?”

“Yes. It's like sports for us. It's a difference in values.”

When Dird and Alea said that Shou had no room to argue, but it seemed that there was a difference in values between them, as aliens, and Shou, as an earthling.

“It's ... ... natural for us. We may work together today with someone who was an adversary yesterday. That's a very natural thing in the universe.”

“But, but” Even after being admonished by the calm Apuesta, Shou was still not convinced.

“Shou, we are only fighting over the distribution of our interests. Once that is decided, there is no need to fight anymore. We will be able to be friends. If that is the case, then we are prepared so that we don't leave any strange grudges behind.”

“Prepared ... ...”

“Yes, yes! And besides, unlike before, we're all going to be one country! But is there a possibility of a civil war?”

“Most of the radicals have already been captured or fled. It's unlikely. Besides, if we were to start a civil war of any kind, Palty's relatives would come in droves. That's scary!”

Alea smirked, and Palty gave her a slightly annoyed look.

“It's just a name that's stuck. You know ... ... that's mean, Alea.”

“Haha. Sorry, sorry.” Alea slapped Palty on the back with a bang.

Feeling a little relieved to know that Dird and the others were really no different than before, Shou decided to ask another question that had sprung up.

“Speaking of which, Minamida-san said that you chose this method of fighting. Does that mean that this is the fight that everyone wanted?”

Alea answered that question. “Hmmm. It's not so much a decision by us personally, but by the higher-ups of each guild. The only rule they set was to gather the representatives on this island and decide on the distribution of concessions. So, it doesn't matter what it is. We can talk, we can kill each other.”

“... ... So, you're saying that everyone chose to kill each other?”

“No, Shou; the Guilds are represented by twenty people. Right now, it's divided into four factions that are fighting each other, but that's the part ... ... that we managed to discuss.”

“Apuesta is right, Shou, each of the upper echelons have strong ties to each other from the past, and the rest have become like this by force. If it were possible, we would have preferred to solve the problem through discussion.”

Palty looked frustrated, and Dird and the others nodded their heads in agreement.

“But ... ... we're all fighting for real, aren't we? Even Dird had an arm... ...”

“Huh? Oh~ You mean that time? Heeey, heeey!” Dird smirked, waving her now-healed arm in the air to show she was fine.

“I'm fine. We have the most advanced medical equipment here, prepared by Minamida, and our equipment is fine, except for our heads, even if we hit each other at close range. But then

again, we don't have anyone in our class who would aim for the head at close range."

(But from my point of view, it's still killing each other. Dird and the others, it's like a savage game.) Shou felt uncomfortable with this difference in feeling, but he was relieved that at least there seemed to be no feelings of resentment between the fighting girls.

Then Apuesta said with slightly sad and moist eyes, "Now that Shou has come to this island, he too will eventually have to join the fight or reject it. But, as you may have already heard from Minamida-san, there is no need for you to join the game if you don't think you fit in. Originally, Shou's participation was irregular, so you won't be forced to... ... shouldn't be."

"I suppose so. However, in that case, I think Shou will have his memory erased... ... After a few days, you'll be able to go back to his quiet life on the mainland... ... After all, it's better for Shou to... ..."

"Palty, that's not true!"

"Dird... ..., but... ..."

Palty looked wistful as Dird closed in on her.

"To the original ... ... living ... ...?" Shou's mind reeled at the words. He was about to get caught up in this mess of a fight, and he could escape if he wanted to. But Shou felt it was something different. In the first place, Shou didn't have that much attachment to his old life anymore. Life on this island was hard, but it was definitely fun. (And most of all, I think. Is it okay if I erase the memories of being with Dird and the others...?)

"But, but! Even though I was able to make friends with Shou, ...!" Dird frowned sadly, and Shou's feelings wavered even more.

Shou's heart was troubled, and he asked a genuine question. "Dird and the others are amazing enough to be the guild's representatives, right? How can you all be so positive when you have such a big thing on your shoulders?" (If it were me, I'm sure I wouldn't be able to stand such a situation. That's what these girls are carrying with their slender bodies. In fact, they even seemed to be enjoying the fight. I wonder why) Shou wondered.)

"What? Ummm... ... Well, it's true that the representative is the representative~. But I'm number 1882 in the guild's line of succession~"

"... ... Eh?"

"We're each a candidate for the guild's succession. And from among those candidates, a representative was chosen... ... Well, there are many things. I'm the representative of the order of succession 23200 (lol), and the highest is Apuesta's 215, right? Alea asked, and Apuesta nodded her head.

“That's right. By the way, I'm number 3399.”

Shou was honestly surprised when the four of them spoke lightly without any pretense of seriousness.

“Eh, let's see, that's no longer in the order of inheritance or something, is it?”

“Yes, it is. Everyone else gave all sorts of reasons and rejected the right to represent~”

“Rejected? You mean they turned it down?”

“Yes, that's right. It's a battle of interests, you know. If you think about it, even Shou can understand what will happen if we lose. It's going to be a horrible future!” Alea said with a suspicious look on her face, as if she was imitating a ghost to scare him.

Shou was immediately convinced. Being a representative was a heavy job, and it was obvious that if they lost, they would be the target of slander. If you don't win, you're just a poor loser. (I'm sure the girls knew this when they took on the role. They are strong and kind at the same time), Shou thought.

(They couldn't stand to look at you, could they? See, that's what they did, too. I think they wanted to help Shou because he was in the same situation as them.) He thought back to Mike's words. Shou felt as if he could now understand what he meant.

“Shou, don't be so serious. Our families are being protected by the organizers. We're not going to die. If something happens to us, we can go into exile.”

“That's right, Shou! We'll be fine! You don't have to worry!”

“Yes, yes, there's no need for Shou to be gloomy.”

Apuesta, Dird, and Alea each offer words of encouragement to Shou.

“Thanks for the ... ... But I still don't know what I'm going to do about ... ...”

“Shou, you'll probably have to answer tomorrow or the next day. So, in the meantime, please think about what the hell you want to do.”

“... ... Yeah.”

The Earth. The universe. The pirate guild. The battle. The school. My classmates. My parents... Himeko and the others... Dird and the others... and myself. There was so much to think about. Shou was desperately trying to clear his head, which was about to be punctured from overthinking.

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“Hello Shou-kun.”

“Hi. Hello. Sorry for yesterday's day, Kukoma-kun.”

“Oh, not only Minamida-san, but also ... ... Miron-sensei?”

After school that day. Shou was summoned by Minamida to the school nurse's office. Waiting for him there were Minamida and Miron; it was obvious that this was a continuation of last night's conversation, but why was Miron here?

“As promised, I'm here to continue our conversation. First of all, we need to make sure that no information is leaked to the outside world.” Minamida said, using a small terminal to control something. Then something like a jet-black wall spread across the room, and Shou felt as if he were trapped in this space.

“It's called a 'secret wall'. I won't go into details, but it keeps our conversations from leaking out.” Minamida gave a brief explanation and sat down on a pipe chair, Shou followed suit and sat down, albeit with trepidation, and Miron sat down on the bed.

“Well, ... I guess I should tell you about Miss Miron first.”

“Oh Minamida, you haven't told Shou-kun about me yet?”

“Yeah. I'm sure Kukoma-kun didn't have much time yesterday.”

“Well, ..., could it be that Miron-sensei is also involved?” At Shou's words, Minamida and Miron both gave small nods.

“She's the watcher for the Earth side, and I'm the watcher for the Galactic Federation side. Of course, she knows about the battle.”

“That's what I meant. I'm sorry I didn't tell you before, Shou-kun.”

“No, ... I didn't know that.” While surprised that everyone close to him was involved in the battle, Shou felt a certain sense of relief. It was because he felt as if he had been somehow validated by being told the truth.

“Alright then, next I'll give you another overview of this battle. First of all, this galaxy is divided into four major groups. There are two large alliances, and many nations that are not part of either of those alliances and are self-governing. And then there are the pirate guilds, who don't have a permanent home and make their living by robbing others.”

“So, there are that many groups...” It was completely the world of science fiction to Shou. The sheer scale of the story overwhelmed Shou, but he struggled to hear and accept the words.

“Of course, all of these organizations are people who take space for granted as a place to live. A

few years ago, the top hundred strongest of the confirmed pirate guilds disappeared or ceased to function as guilds. The number of disappearances is still increasing, due in part to the collaboration between the two alliances.”

"I've heard of Space Pirates ... ... before, but there really is such an organization?"

“Yes. Well, even if we call them pirates in a nutshell, the larger the scale, the more different the people that make up the organization. So, don't get me wrong, the truly vicious pirates that you might imagine, Kukoma-kun, are actually only a handful. The majority of them are pirates because it's their family business, and that's the overwhelming majority.”

“So, pirates in the family business?”

“Yes. And even though they're pirates, there's a much larger percentage of ordinary citizens who aren't actually involved in piracy, as you can see from Dird and the others.”

“Yes ... ... But it's kind of crazy, isn't it?”

“Haha. There's a lot of complications about space pirates. So, when a lot of people get together, they naturally have to maintain the systems necessary for food, clothing, and shelter. So, it was decided to give the people who lost the framework of a guild a new framework called a country. Originally, the guilds had an organizational structure similar to that of a country. As long as they have a defined territory, they can operate as a country without much trouble.”

Shou took in the words slowly, thought about them for a moment, and then asked Minamida. “I see... ... So, the battle Dird and the others are fighting is to secure power and space for the creation of the new country?”

“Yes! Thanks for catching on so quickly. Rather than a full-blown all-out war, it's much more peaceful to have a proxy war on this island like this.”

“That may be true ... ...” It seemed that way even to Shou, who didn't know much about the universe.

“Actually, it would have been best if they could have solved everything through discussion. As expected, they are pirates. It's not like they can just talk it out. That's why we ended up like this.”

“I see. ... ... So that's what happened.” Shou managed to understand and decided to ask the question he had been holding onto. “But why is that battle taking place on Earth and why is someone like me getting involved? I've heard about it from Dird and Mike, but what's the real reason?”

Minamida paused for a beat, “Well,” he said, and continued his explanation. “Earth is a special protectorate. “The main reason is that there are watchers, and because it's in a remote area, it's hard to get in the way of the game. Of course, there are many other reasons as well.”

“Specially protected land? Oh, by the way, Mike told me about the queen of the host country, and the man who was the catalyst for destroying the pirates.”

Then Miron let out a small “pfft” and said while stifling a laugh. “Shou-kun. Actually, that man is none other than this Minamida.”

“What? Minamida-san?”

“Oh my god, Kukoma-kun! I beg you, please keep this between us! I don't want Dird and the others to know about this. Seriously!”

“Whoa! I, I, I understand.” Shou couldn't help but nod his head as Minamida's uncharacteristically agitated manner of approaching him. It seemed that he really didn't want to be found out.

“Well, ... Minamida-san, are you really from Earth?”

“Yes, he is. He is the second example of a pure Earthling who has legally gone into space. He's a lucky guy!” Miron said in a somewhat sarcastic tone, and Minamida gave her an annoyed look.

“Destroying pirates ... ... Minamida, you must have been a great guy.”

“Don't. No, no, no. I'm pretty sure I was the one who inspired ... ... to destroy the pirates. I didn't do all that much. But for Dird and the others, it's no exaggeration to say that I'm a duplicitous enemy, so to speak.”

“Ah ... ... I see.”

Dird and the others were members of the pirate guild. Some of them may have a grudge against Minamida, of course. He said, “I'm not going to reveal myself to them. It's a natural decision.

“Huh. Don't give away my secret out of the blue, Miss Miron, do you have any awareness of your role as a watcher?”

“Hmph! I don't have much of that!”

“Don't you dare!”

The two were noisy again today. Shou laughed in distress, and Minamida continued with a slightly mixed expression.

“So, back to the topic at hand, the person who organized this fight is actually a rather troubled person. The reason why you are involved in this fight is because of a little accident, a man-made disaster, I guess. Anyway, that's why I agreed to let you participate, just because it sounded fun.”

“What?”

“I'm sorry! But I'd appreciate it if you didn't ask me any more questions right now... ... I'm sorry for the really messed up story.”

“Ha, ha.” Shou couldn't pursue the matter any further as Minamida looked somewhat tired.

“Yes, yes, Shou-kun. We are the only pure Earthlings on this island, but Minamida's parents and sister live on Earth, and there are actually descendants of the first queen who went into space. And some people on Earth have known this for a long time. So, as an Earthling, you are not alone in this. What do you think? Do you feel a little more secure?”

“Huh? Oh, really?”

Minamida connected Miron's words together.

“Yes, I do. That's why the Galactic Federation - or rather, the country that hosted this event - offered a deal in exchange for not letting us mess with anyone living on Earth.”

“A deal? That's what the weird shows and books call the secret deal theory or ... ...!?”

“Haha. No technology will be provided at all. It's against the laws of the Galactic Federation.”

Minamida smiled wryly, “So then what?” Minamida said to Shou, who shook his head.

“It's, you know, the pioneering rights of Earth's human race for several light years.”

“Pioneering ..... rights?” It was an unfamiliar word. What would happen if he had that?

“Shou-kun, think about it. I wonder how the Earthlings would feel if they found out that when they finally made a full-scale foray into space, it was not actually theirs, but had already been taken over by someone else ... ... aliens?”

“... ... Ah!”

“I think you've figured it out. The space that is to be given to Dird and the others is actually very close to the space that was given to them for exploration. As a condition of Kukoma-kun's participation this time, a bit of Earth's space rights was added to the prize.”

“What? Then, if I lose, the Earth will be?!” Shou was horrified, he couldn't dare to participate in the competition if the earth's human race would be in trouble because of him. It's too scary!

Perhaps because he saw the shocked expression on Shou's face, Minamida continued with a smile. “It's okay. There is an area of space that was originally guaranteed to be safe. It and the Earth have been designated as completely belonging to Earthlings. The benefits this time around are the additional space and Earth's seat in the Galactic Federation, which it shouldn't have.”

“Oh ....., is that so?” Shou patted his chest in relief.

“That's right. So, if you win, the benefits to Earth will be enormous! After all, we'll have more space to explore, we'll have pooled rewards for our seats, and we'll be able to use those pooled rewards once Shou and the Earthlings are in space and recognized as part of the Federation! Oh yes, and of course the personal rewards for Shou-kun will be enormous. One of them is going into space. How about that? Isn't that a great story?”

“Ha, ha. It sure looks amazing, though.”

Minamida interjected, puzzling over Shou's excitement at Miron.

“But that's all if we win the battle.”

“Is it a battle?” Shou had no idea what to expect. He knew what they were talking about, but that didn't mean he could enter the fray with any enthusiasm. Shou couldn't understand how Dird and the others could be so happy in their daily lives and yet be fighting so fiercely behind the scenes. It must be a gap in common sense.

Perhaps it was because Shou had such a difficult expression on his face that Minamida continued to speak. “Kukoma-kun. What you just said is true. But you don't have to force yourself to go along with it.”

“... ... Minamida-san?”

“Even if we say that the earth side will get the right, it requires the earth's civilization to develop beyond a certain level, and it is estimated that it will take quite a few years to reach that level. Before that, there's no guarantee that the Earth or humanity will develop to that level intact.”

“.....”

“So, you can give up your rights now and go back to your daily life. Even if you participate, you can surrender right away if you think it's dangerous. I don't know if I should put it this way, but Dird and the others have their reasons for not losing. But you don't have them. The weight of what you are carrying on your back is different. So even if you do join, I want you to put the protection of your own life first.”

“Minamida-san .....”

“Hey Minamida, talking like that will only make Shou-Kun uneasy, right? With the Guardian System in place, it's not like his life is in danger. The armor is of the older generation, and the medical technology can repair everything as long as the head is still intact.”

“Even so, there will be contingencies. We may not be able to destroy a large area, but we can still destroy the body with pinpoint accuracy. There are no absolutes in technology, you know.”

“But, if I were you, I wouldn't stray from 'never'! Minamida was the same way, wasn't he?”

Then Shou realized that Minamida was a human being who had been out in the universe, and like Shou, he must have been faced with many decisions and struggled with them.

“.....Minamida-san, what kind of choice did you make to go into space?”

At Shou's words, Minamida said, his eyes narrowing slightly as he looked through his sunglasses. “... ... I took the demon's hand, smiling gently. But it wasn't forced on me by anyone, nor was it intended as a reward. It was because ... ... I wanted to.”

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Eventually, Shou left the room, and Miron said, as if she had been watching him. “Hmm. The arrogance of the haves, Minamida.”

“It is the duty of those who know, Miss Miron.”

It was very unusual for Miron to be this intimidating towards Minamida. Normally, she would only think of making an instant fait accompli if such a private situation came up.

“With the technology in the universe, the world will change. Maybe all the problems in this world can be solved at once. No, most things could be done. And it would save a lot of Earth lives, wouldn't it? Isn't that right?”

“That may be true, ... but it would only be a temporary fix. Above all, gaining technology that Earthlings can't handle won't solve the fundamental problem. If anything, there is too much potential for that technology to create new fires and start conflicts.”

“Then we'll just have to work really hard to be able to handle that technology. Sooner or later, earthlings will have the same technology as you and Dird and the others, right?”

“Miss Miron, it's important for people to realize that it's technology they take for granted. It's a history of development and problem solving. Once you've accepted the technology without problems, the rest of the world won't be able to accept over-technology so easily. It will be too much for them. It will eventually lead to disaster. I'm not going to let that happen to this planet.”

“... ... Is that your opinion as a pure Earthling? Or is that your opinion as someone who has been up in space?”

Minamida looked down and said, “I know it's contradictory. But fortunately, I had people who were willing to take the blame for any problems that arose from those contradictions, so I was able to manage.”

“Hmph. What's that, a sly way to talk.”

“If you say I'm arrogant, you're right. But the organizer of this proxy war is very strict with those who blindly believe that rights are granted as a matter of course.”

“Hmm. Is that, for example, the submarine that washed up on the beach recently?”

“... ... Well, I'd better get going.” Without answering Miron's question, Minamida also left the room.

Left alone, Miron sat in her chair and mumbled to herself as she looked out at the peaceful scenery outside. “I wonder what conclusion Shou-kun will come to?”

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“Hey, hey, Shou! Would you like to work with me?”

“Huh?”

The day after Shou found out everything. First of all, it was in the morning. After a quick breakfast with Dird, who had come to pick him up, he put on his school uniform and was walking along the nature-filled path to school as usual. She suddenly said to him.

“What do you mean by teaming up ... ... Eh?”

“It's a proxy war~! Oh, but of course, that's only if Shou decides to join! If you're going to get involved in the war, at least come to my place so I can protect you!”

“Dird.....” Shou remembered that the four guilds were currently in a state of conflict. In that situation, a slow learner like himself would probably make things difficult for Dird.

“And I don't want to be separated from Shou. I'm sure you'll be happy to know that I've been able to make friends with you and I don't want you to leave me! That's why I want Shou to join us!”

“... ... Dird”

The pure sparkle in her eyes made Shou weaken. He hadn't yet decided if he wanted to join this war, or if he wanted to go back to his old life. “But, you know, ... I don't think it's going to help at all if I'm the only one who joins, right?”

It was an honest sentiment; Shou didn't think he had much to offer, in fact he had only ever once in his life thought of himself as amazing, though Himeko had only ever told him he could be useful for menial tasks.

“No, you're not! I'm just happy that Shou is here.”

“— Eh?” What does that mean? He was about to ask that, but by then they had already arrived at school.

“Oh, you don't have to decide now. I'm sure it's going to bother me a lot!”

“What? What kind of ... ... is that?”

“Hehe. My time is up! I'll see you later!” Dird said and walked into the school building.

“... ... I'm having a lot of trouble at this point.” While thinking about the meaning of Dird's words, Shou also slowly walked towards the school building.

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“Hey Shou, would you like to team up with me?”

“What?”

It was in a classroom. It was during class. It was an information class where the students were paired up with their neighbors to think about a particular issue. During the class, Alea, who had been assigned to work with Shou, suddenly said something like that.

“Oh, don't make silly jokes about how we're already working together.”

I wonder if this is what Dird meant when she said, “I'm going to be very worried.

“Well, but I haven't even decided if I'm going to join yet, and I think that even if you team up with me, I'll only be able to be of use in a small way.”

“Hahaha. That's fine.”

“Huh?”

He looked away from the tablet and looked at Alea. She glanced at him too.

“Because if Shou's here, it'll be fun. I'm not trying to get Shou to fight for me to win, not at all. Don't worry.”

She smiled slightly, and Shou couldn't help but blush.

Well, you can give me an answer later. Dird asked you out this morning anyway, didn't she?”

“Huh? How did you know?”

Shou was surprised, but Alea stifled a laugh and said, “Damn. I know what that idiot is going to do. You'll have to think about it then.”

“Hey there, you two! Stop talking to each other! You're annoying me like a couple!”

“Yes, yes, I'm sorry.”

As Shou stared at her face, he couldn't think of anything else for the rest of the class.

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“... ... Shou, would you like to team up with me if you don't mind?”

“What?”

It was about twenty minutes before the lunch break started.

They were now in front of the lunch truck. Shou and Apuesta had left class early to fill in for Tomi, who was too busy to do the lunch distribution today. They were busy preparing for the coming influx of students when Apuesta said to him as they worked.

“By teaming up, you mean the ... ... proxy war, right?”

“Yeah. I'm not too surprised ... ..., right?”

“Ah, haha.”

That's because two of them had already asked him to join them. He had prepared himself for the possibility.

“But I don't think I can be of much help, can I?” Shou said the same thing to Apuesta that he had said to Dird and Alea, because he felt that it would be unfair not to say the same thing to each of the girls who had invited him.

Apuesta stopped her hand, looked at Shou, and said, “Ummm... no. No, I don't think so, Shou's presence would be a great help.”

Apuesta's eyes were very kind. “Shou is very serious and sincere in his work. I think that's why I want you to be with me.”

“... ...Apuesta.”

“... ...It's a bit naughty.”

“Oh, haha ... ...”

Too much overestimation, Shou thought with a wry smile. I've been working with Apuesta for a while now, and I think we'll get along just fine. However, it's not an issue that can be decided so easily.

“You don't have to decide right away. Think it over.”

“... ... Yeah.”

Apuesta was aware of this and gave him such kind words.

“Well then, I'll give it one more try.”

“... ... Yes!”

The lunch break was approaching and the two of them began working impatiently again.

Shou was even more troubled by the solicitation of a third person, but he didn't realize until the very end that Apuesta was speaking without a vocalizer.

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“Shou, if you don't mind, would you like to team up with my Jurai Guild?”

“... ... I knew this would happen.”

It was after school. School was over and Shou thought that Palty would never ask him, but on their way home alone, Palty suddenly said to him.

“Hmm. You've already been recruited by three people, and you look like you're exhausted.”

“Oh, you know what I mean?”

“Because it's Dird and the others. I expected that since I was given the task of sending Shou home like this. I have to thank the girls for their fair spirit.”

“... ... I see.”

Shou beamed at Palty, who chuckled.

“I'm the fourth one, aren't I? I know you can't decide to join a fight right away, because Shou is so kind.”

“Well, that's not true, but ... ...”

“No, it doesn't. It does happen. Otherwise, the four of us who came to the island and barged in all of a sudden wouldn't have been so accepting. Especially for an adolescent boy.”

That was the case. Of course, one factor was that each of the girls had a beautiful appearance, and the fact that they were the seniors who had taught him how to live on the island was also a big factor. But even so, the idea of pitching a tent and spending the morning and evening with four girls on the same property was quite a hurdle for the average high school boy.

“Thanks for the ... ..., Palty, do you mind if I think about it some more?”

“Yes, of course. I'm afraid I can't give you much time, but until then, please think about it.”

“..... Yes. Thank you.”

“Oh no, I'm the one who should be thanking you. Thank you for your trouble, Shou.”

They smiled at each other and returned to their now familiar home.

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That night, Shou finished dinner as usual with Dird, Alea, Apuesta, Palty, and Miron, and when he was full, Dird and the other four went home for the night, even though they had their own tents set up.

“... ... I guess they were being considerate.” Shou thought so. Perhaps the girls already knew that each of them had invited Shou. So, they left early to give Shou time to think.

“You know, Shou-kun is really irresistible. So, what are you going to do about it?”

“I don't know yet, Miron-sensei ... ...”

Miron gulped down a bottle of sake, apparently aware of Shou's feelings.

“I can see why you're worried, but ... ... well, it's safer to team up with a girl who has a good chance of winning.”

“That may be ... ... true, though. But it's not an easy decision to make.”

“Huh, yeah, I figured Shou-kun would say that. But hey, think about it.” Miron put down the sake bottle, looked straight at Shou and said, “I'm sure Shou-kun now understands what it means to win this battle. It's not the same as what we have on Earth, but it's the technology of the universe. ... ... The power to easily heal even a single arm injury. If you wanted to, you could go to the ends of the galaxy - or even further. The super technology that you want so badly is within your reach. You can also earn the right to go into space yourself. It's a ridiculous pipe dream if you just talk about it, but it's reality.”

“.....” Shou hadn't really thought about it, but Miron was right.

Currently, Earth was a remote, undeveloped planet in the eyes of Minamida and Dird. Without much technology, it would be impossible to heal injuries easily, let alone travel freely through space.

And if he won, Earth would have a chance to get that technology - and he'd be able to go into space. That certainly sounded appealing.

“Minamida was one of the few examples of an Earthling who has already reached that realm. He was one of only two people who have done so. Meeting him is just as precious.”

I see... This is the kind of possibility that Sensei... ... was talking about. Besides...”

The reason why Miron was so obsessed with Minamida until now. Shou somehow understood that. The way Miron occasionally gazed into space as if she was pining for him was linked to that idea.

“Shou-kun. You also hold the potential to do the same. If you win this game, or if you follow one of the girls and she wins, you will get a part of the control. If you do, you will have the right to go into space. Maybe you'll be the rare third example.”

“... ... Yes.”

“... ... Huh. But that doesn't mean you have to look so serious.” Miron's tone was serious, but she quickly changed her voice to the original light-hearted one. "Minamida says that it's a matter of fate that we meet when we wave our hands at each other, and that the pamphlet that brought Shou Kun to this island was given to your mother by a friend, wasn't it?"

“Oh, yes. That's what my mother told me. I'm pretty sure she said her friend gave it to her.”

“Huh. That friend is actually Minamida's mother.”

“What? Is that so?”

“Yes. So, the pamphlet that originally came to Minamida came to Shou-kun. It's probably just a coincidence, but without it, you wouldn't have met Minamida, me, or the girls. You wouldn't have been troubled like this. It's strange.”

“... ... Yes, it is. It really is strange.”

“I wonder if the fact that you are able to enter this battle is an extension of that strange connection. I'm sure you're not the only one. Then we can only call that fate a blessing in disguise. That's what I think.”

“... ... That's right. I think that's right, if you ask me.” The more he thought about it, the stranger and more difficult it became.

“I'm sorry. I'll just think about it a little more on my own.”

“That's a good idea. You'll have to decide your own future, won't you?”

Miron stood up, still holding the liquor bottle, and walked back towards the opulent cruiser.

“- Oh, yes, yes. I forgot I had one message for you.”

“.....?”

On her way, Miron looked back once and said plainly.

“Nine o'clock this evening! We'll be waiting at the round table by the branch school yard!”

Miron turned to the cruiser again and walked away.

“... ... What? Wait a minute, Sensei! Could that be...!”

“Hmm? Yeah, it's a message from Dird and the girls.”

“What ... ...? Nine o'clock is ... ...! It's only an hour away! What? You want me to decide in that time?

“Hmph. I'm sure you'll be able to figure it out without going bald. Young man!”

“Wow! I can't think about it at all. ～～～～!”

Miron smiled as she walked into the cruiser, leaving Shou to ponder.

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And the hour flew by.

“... ... huh, huh ... ... mi, everyone ... ...” Breathing hard, Shou arrived at the school, running as fast as he could under a starry sky that would never be seen in the city. And when he arrived at the place as the message said.

Dird, Alea, Apuesta, and Palty were waiting for Shou, lit up by the stars.

“Ah! Shou~! I'm so glad you're here!”

“I thought Miron forgot to give you our message!”

“I'm glad you came ... ...”

“You're right, Shou, I'm sorry I didn't give you much time to think.”

“Yeah, it's okay.” Shou stood in front of the four of them, his mind already made up.

The girls looked at each other and then Palty stepped forward to represent them.

And then.

“Shou. Who will you choose?

A moment of silence.

Dird fidgeted, Alea looked somewhat happy, Apuesta looked a little uneasy, and Palty looked at Shou with a sincere gaze.

(I've decided to go with .....) This is the result of a lot of worrying and self-questioning. Shou confirmed it once more in his ..... mind, and then opened his mouth. “I'm not... working with anyone.”

“—What?” The girls were all taken aback by his answer.

“I don't want to team up with ... ... any of you girls to fight any of the others. And I don't want to see Dird and the others fight each other, either.”

“Shou! But that's only if we ourselves are convinced...”

Alea said, interrupting Dird with a hand in front of her.

“I guess that means negotiations have broken down. But what are you going to do on your own? You're not going to stop us all by force, are you? Or... are you going to abstain and leave the island?”

“... ... That's ... ...” Shou couldn't answer; he couldn't decide what to do on his own in that short amount of time.

“... ... ... it then.” Dird murmured. She looked at Shou straight in the eyes with an unusually sharp gaze and said, “Then ..... I'll force Shou into the guild!”

“Eeee!”

Shou wasn't alone; Alea, Apuesta, and Palty were also taken aback by Dird's decision.

Dird had suddenly summoned some sort of humanoid energy body and had moved into a battle stance, wearing it on herself. The figure, equipped with what looked like a gauntlet or anklet, was the same one Shou had seen her use the night he had arrived on the island.

“Wait, hey Dird, are you serious about using a Guardian in a place like this!”

“Seriously, it's like ... ...”

“Well, it can't be helped, can it?”

The three of them, Alea, Apuesta, and Palty, must have realized Dird's feelings, because each of them summoned an energy body, which they called a Guardian. Alea had a rifle-like weapon as tall as she was, and Apuesta's Guardian had a huge, swollen right hand. Palty held a sword so long that she could hardly hold it in one hand.

“What, what, what .....!?” Shou was frightened by the unbelievable sight and the insurmountable power...

“..... And, and, and, and you should run away!”

He ran as fast as he could towards the school building!

“Mmmm ～～～～! I'm not going to give up on Shou, no matter how many of us there are. ～～～～!

“It's the same for me! Dird, that's too sudden!”

“I'm with ... ...!”

“Of course, I'm with you! Eh? Shou's not here?

“Oh! Shou's over there! e's running away before we even know it: ～～～～!”

Dird and the others had summoned the Guardians, and because they were wary of each other, their reaction to Shou's movements seemed to have been delayed. The four of them began to chase after him.

“Wait~ Shou oh ～～～～!”

“Well, even if you say wait, ～～～～!” Shou was running to escape and hide inside the school building, but the movements of Dird and the others in the Guardians was much faster than Shou's, and he couldn't seem to escape in the flesh...

“Shou, I'm sorry!”

“!? Whoa!

Dird, who was catching up, tried to attack Shou with her Guardian-clad arm. For a moment, Shou thought he was going to die, but for some reason, there was no pain in his body.

Shou opened his eyes and removed the arm that had been protecting his face.

“What?”

There, Shou discovered that his entire body was surrounded by something strange. It was an energy body that looked like a humanoid upper body, and Shou was inside it. It looked like a cockpit of some kind, with a spherical control device attached to the position of both hands. There was nothing else that looked like a device, so Shou decided that this was how he could control this energy body. He touched the sphere with his right hand, hoping to move it, and the right arm of the energy body covering Shou's body began to move as he had hoped.

“... ... Also, maybe this... ... me, is it?” The energy body swayed as if it embodied Shou's life force, but it moved with a certain reality, and Shou's eyes reflected both surprise and confusion.

“Well, it looks like Shou's Guardian has been activated. But it's not supposed to work so well out of the blue. Okay, whoever snatches Shou first can bring him into the guild, I guess!”

“Yes!” “Okay.” “I don't have a choice!”

“What? Wait, wait, wait, wait!”

Alea was right. Even if he could get the Guardian out, Shou didn't even know how to use it. He didn't even know why he had the same power as Dird and the others in the first place. On the other hand, there was no way that Shou could resist Dird and the others, who seemed to be very familiar with them.

“Come on, Shou!”

“Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa!

Dird's continuous attack. Although her fist was caught by the Guardian's ‘shield’ that he unconsciously made appear, Shou was blown away by the impact and rolled around the schoolyard.

“Uhh, ..., that's it... ... That's it. What? I'm not injured ... ...?” It was then that Shou first understood the benefits of the Guardian. He instinctively understood the importance of using this ‘shield’ to protect himself from attacks in a fight.

“Oh, what? I've been blocked?”

“Really? Dird is supposed to be pretty effective, right?”

“It was blocked by the shield ... ...?”

“Yes. And that was with the correct impact compatibility.”

Dird and the others were whispering to each other. Shou couldn't hear them, but he was worried that they were having a strategy meeting.

“Hey, hey, is this really his first real battle?”

“But, but, it could just be a coincidence, you know?”

Alea looked dubious, and Dird returned in annoyance. Then Apuesta and Palty said.

“We'll have to try ... ... that... ...”

“... ... That's right. Maybe Shou can be a stronger enemy than we think.”

Dird and the four others nodded to each other and moved into battle stance again.

“Oh, you know, ... can we stop now?” Shou, who had lost his nerve, said this fearfully.

But...

“I can't do that!”

“That’s right~!”

She cut him off with a bang. He had no choice but to make up his mind now.

“Ush! Then I'll go next!”

“Wah! No, stop!” Shou ran away before he could sigh.

But Alea's weapon was a rifle. It was a huge long-range weapon. Naturally, Shou could not escape, and the rifle mercilessly fired a blinding beam of light.

“Ugh!

Alea's ray of light was bent and deflected in a different direction, and Shou managed to save himself.

“What the hell? Anti-light gravity shield! Well, it was completely blocked again.” Alea had a surprised expression.

Shou was conversely puzzled as to why she would be so surprised when he just produced a shield.

“Apuesta isn't really equipped for combat at the moment, is she? Then I'll be next at ...!”

“Wow, even Palty!”

Palty pounced on Shou with a sharp sword that was longer than he was tall and struck him with quick strikes, and Shou could only defend against the attacks. He could only block the attack with his shield as before, but Palty and the others were all looking at him in amazement. (Hey, I'm getting by, but ... ... this is not good!) He's just trying to prevent the attack. He didn't even know how far he could go.

Shou was in a hurry, but it was Dird and the others who kept a stern expression on their faces.

“Shou... ... is amazing! You blocked them all!”

“Oi, this is getting harder and harder to hand over to Dird and the others. That's the guy who

beat the Queen.”

“I'm sure no one taught you how to use the shield change.”

“It's real... ... Apparently, Shou hasn't figured it out yet, though.”

“.....?” Shou couldn't quite make sense of what Dird and the others were saying, then Alea said.

“That's why I'm afraid. I know that you have talent. But right now, you're just instinctively defending yourself. I'm sure I can take him down now. Right? Apuesta.”

She nodded. Dird and Palty also seemed to have sensed something in Alea's words, and each of them made eye contact with the other.

“Yes, that's true. But it's going to be a lot of trouble if we do it one at a time.”

Palty replied, and Alea agreed, “I guess so.”

“Good. If we can't do it alone, we'll go to ... ...” Alea murmured, and the other three nodded in unison.

“We'll just seize the ... ... all together! We'll discuss who gets him in afterwards!”

“Agreed!”

“Yeah, yeah, yeah! Wait, wait, ～～～～!”

The four of them attacked at the same time, and Shou scrambled to escape. He managed to use the Guardian to move around, but it was difficult to do so with his improvised maneuvers. Dird and the others quickly approached from behind, and Shou continued to run while desperately deploying his shield.

“Shou, just give up and come to me! Then you won't get scared!”

“That's my... line!”

“Shou, you can't fight this alone!”

“Yes, Shou, please. Please give up before you hurt yourself.”

“Damn, damn ... ...!”

No matter how many times he tried, he was outnumbered. The attacks of the girls were swift, and it was extremely difficult to switch defenses in response to each one. So naturally, Shou, a novice Guardian user, had no way to win against the four of them...

“Agh!!! Aaahhhh!”

Eventually, he failed to deploy his shield and took Dird's fist squarely in the face.

“I hit him! That was a decent hit!”

While Dird's joyful voice could be heard, Shou was blown backwards and plunged into the school building with his momentum. The school building was an old one, and the entrance was always open, so he flew to the shoe box and fell down.

“Guh... ... Uh... ...” He staggered to his feet. It's a good thing that the Guardian was there, because although the shield failed to deploy, there were no noticeable wounds on Shou. He was still able to move, with only a slight back injury.

“Shou, please! Just give up already!”

Dird led the way into the school building. The expression on her face was one of pain. But...

“I can't give up and join ... ... someone else's guild.”

“Ah!”

Shou got into his Guardian again and ran around the school building. Dird, Alea, and Palty naturally chased after Shou, who still hadn't given up.

The first-floor hallway ... ... up the stairs to the second floor ... ...

“Damn ... ... there's nowhere to run!” Shou realized that running into the school building was a mistake.

The school was not very large, a two-story wooden building. The structure was a simple rectangle with long corridors on the first and second floors. There are only classrooms and small rooms where it is possible to hide...

“... ... Let's go to Miron-sensei's infirmary for now!”

It's the safest place for some reason. Shou was thinking of going straight forward down the second-floor corridor, shaking off Dird and the others who were chasing him from behind, and then returning to the first floor to escape to the infirmary, but ...

“—Shou..... sorry!”

“Huh! Whaaaaat!!!?”

There was the sound of glass shattering as Shou was blown out of the hallway and into a classroom by the giant Guardian's fist. Apparently, he had been attacked from right next to him.

“U... ... ah... ...!”

That was when Shou realized that Apuesta had come around from the outside and attacked him. And he was ashamed that he had been so stupid as to just run straight down the corridor and try to escape in such an easily understood school building. It's no wonder his movements were so easily read.

“Ugh!” Shou collapsed; when he slowly got up, he saw that all four girls were there.

“Shou... ... stop it, okay? Right?”

“Damn, don't make me take too much trouble, Shou.”

“Sorry, Shou... ...”

“Shou, we don't want to be any rougher on you either. Please don't run away again.”

He realized. (I can't run away anymore!)

“Shou, can we just stop? And hey, I want you to join my guild!”

“No, it's me! You're the one who should give up, Dird!”

“Shou, come with me to ... ...”

“Shou, you have no choice but to choose one of these people... ...”

“Ugh ...!”

Shou retreated slowly on his butt, but there was no escape route behind him. With his back to the blackboard, Shou was surrounded by four people and couldn't move. All was not well. He had to give an answer here. You can't run away anymore.

But... still! “I don't want to go to .....!” Shou said with a strong will.

“And yet! I can't just pick any one of the four of you!”

“Shou.....!”

The four were perplexed, but they still understood Shou's firm intentions.

“... ... my hands, I can capture Shou's Guardian. We'll talk about it afterwards.”

“... ...I suppose so. I'll leave it to you, Apuesta.”

Apparently, Apuesta's Guardian's huge hand was meant to capture her opponent's Guardian. That big hand reached out to Shou. There was no way to escape.

Shou also tried to move the Guardian with his battered body, but perhaps because of fatigue, the Guardian did not move well. It was also impossible to deploy the shield. (... ... Damn it! What am I supposed to do? What am I supposed to do!?)

“Shou, give up already.”

Apuesta's Guardian's hands captured Shou's body. At that moment...

Shou's Guardian's hand on the blackboard - his fingers accidentally scratched the blackboard.

– – Gi gi gi gi gi gi gi gi gi gi gi gi gi gi gi!

“!? Ugh, ugh, ugh, ugh! Aaahhhhhh!” Apuesta dropped to her knees and cowered.

“No, no, no, no, no, no!”

“Ugh! Gyaaaaahhhh!”

“Kyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!?”

Almost at the same time as Apuesta was suffering, Dird also started buzzing and shaking her head, Alea rolled around the classroom like a spoiled child, Palty fell down on the floor.

“What? Eh, eh! Is ... ... it perhaps, this sound?” Shou lightly tapped the blackboard again. He scratched the blackboard lightly once more, and that unpleasant sound echoed again. He stopped scratching in a hurry.

Rattle, rattle, rattle!

At that moment, the door of the classroom opened violently. And what appeared was a sweaty Minamida. “Ah! Stop, stop, stop! That's it! That's it!”

As a watcher, he rushed in, forcing the battle to end. In addition, Shou and Minamida hurriedly took care of Dird and the others who had fainted.

Epilogue

In front of the tent that served as Shou's home. On that sandy beach, Shou and the others were all forced to sit upright.

“I thought I heard a shocking noise at the school. What the hell were you guys thinking? Today is not a day for fighting, is it? You can't just suddenly start fighting ... ... and you even used your Guardian against Kukoma-kun! In the first place, the school is a non-combat zone! Do you even know what you've done? It's a good thing that Kukoma happened to use his Guardian system, otherwise he could have been seriously injured!

“... ... I'm sorry.” Dird and the others looked extremely remorseful and apologized, Shou apologized as well. They were currently in the middle of an interview with Minamida and Miron.

“Well, well, Minamida, that's just fine. You know, when you're young, it's okay to be reckless, right? Didn't you do the same?”

“Mi, Miss Miron, please shut up. This is the natural response of an adult.”

"Hmph, you've got a point."

Minamida looked bitter, coughed deliberately, and continued talking. “Well, it's the first-time you guys have done something so reckless. And we are also responsible for Kukoma-kun's case. I'm also aware that I made you guys reckless.”

Minamida glanced at Shou, apparently realizing that Shou's involvement had caused Dird and the others to go too far. “Ahem. So, I'll drop the matter this time, but next time, you must absolutely adhere to the rules of the proxy war. Do you understand? Otherwise, you may all be disqualified.”

“Yes!”

Shou replied clearly, along with Dird and the others. Minamida's expression softened a little as he nodded his head “yes”.

Dird was the first one to come up to Shou and say, “That was terrible, Shou!”

“That's just terrible, Shou~! I don't care how hard you push me; you can't do something like that!”

“Huh? Huh, what?”

“That's right, Shou! You looked like the Grim Reaper back then!”

“Eh, huh?”

“Shou... ... terrible!”

“Eh, eh, eh?”

“Shou, there are certain things that humans are allowed to do and certain things that humans are not allowed to do.”

“Wait, wait, wait, wait!”

All four of them raised their eyebrows in blood, causing Shou to back away, feeling confused and scared at the same time. Even by the light of the starry sky alone, he could tell that the girls were upset.

"Oh, what do you mean?"

Dird replied angrily as he asked. “That's why! It's that sound~! Oh no! The blackboard!”

“What? Ah...” And then Shou remembered. It's true that when Shou's Guardian scratched the blackboard, Dird and the others were squirming like invited guests to a recital by a famous elementary school bully. Then he remembered, “Oh.” When he talked about the blackboard on his first day at the new school, his classmates all reacted strangely, as if they were frozen in place.

“Are you saying that the sound of the ... ... blackboard is bad? I'm the type of person who's surprisingly okay with it.”

“What?” At Shou's words, Dird and the others opened their eyes as if they had seen a monster and were astonished.

“I know, a lot of people don't like that sound, but ... you guys are a bit abnormal, aren't you?”

“No, we're not! We're the norm! Shou is crazy!”

“Oh, really?”

“Yes, you are! It's not fair, Shou! We're all useless! I hate that sound so much; I can't even hear it! I can't move, and I can't fight!”

“Yes, yes. That sound is similar to the crushing sound of a spaceship or station, so it's really scary. You idiot! What are you doing exposing our weaknesses completely?”

“Oh, my god!”

Dird was slapped on the head by Alea and became teary-eyed. Apuesta seemed to have given up on something and said, “Alea is helping you with .....”. Even Palty looked uncomfortable.

(Oh, you're that bad at ... ...? Maybe it's ... ...!) When Shou saw the frightened girls, his eyes

glittered. And declared.

“Minamida-san. I'm officially entering the fray! Without joining anyone's guild, of course!”

“What?!”

Despite the astonishment of the others, Shou was sure of it. Now, he had a powerful weapon. (If I use this, I might be able to stop this proxy war - I might be able to end the battle peacefully without making the girls fight.)

Maybe there was something he could do with his own power. This was a decisive scene that confirmed that Shou, who had been introverted and reluctant to do anything, had changed after coming to this island.

And Shou made a vow to himself. Under the star-filled sky. (I'm going to stop this “Paradise War” myself...!)

To be continued.